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BY BOB GREENE

THE ABC'S OF COURAGE

At day's end, one man learns that he can learn

IT IS morning dusk. The man has finished his day's labor; he is a plumber, and today he was working at a construction site, and his shift has ended.

Now he is sitting in the dining room of Mrs. Patricia Lord, in Cicero, Illinois. Mrs. Lord and the man are heading over a list of words.

"Can you try those now?" Mrs. Lord says.

"Yes," the man says. He looks at the top word on the list. The word is "a."

"Yes," Mrs. Lord says.

The next word on the list is "brow."

The man looks at it for a moment. Then he says, "Brown."

"Yes," Mrs. Lord says. The next word is "do."

"The," the man says, teaching the word with his hand.

"Yes," Mrs. Lord says. The next word is "sleep."

The man breathes. Second pass. He is having trouble with this one.

Finally he says "Play!"

"No," Mrs. Lord says. "Look at it again."

The man stares. He says nothing. Then he says, "I don't know what it is."

"All right," Mrs. Lord says softly. "Stop it and come back to it later."

The man is fifty-five years old. He is trying to learn how to read. He is a large man, balding and wearing thick glasses, he wears a recumbent in the style of Ernest Borgnine. His plumber's work clothes—denim overalls, a flannel shirt—are still on.

Today, as he does twice a week, he has driven straight from work to Mrs. Lord's house. His hands are dirty from his day's labor; as he points to the words on the list, he is soiling his fingers. He has not been to sleep and clean up. He has been coming to Mrs. Lord's house for just over a year.

The next word on the list is "down."

"Down," the man says with confidence in his voice.

"That's right," Mrs. Lord says. "Very good."



THE MAN—we will not name him here, because he has asked us not to—never wanted to read in a child. His mother was sick and his father was an alcoholic; the boy did not do well in school, and at the age of twelve he dropped out and began to work. Sometimes his mother would try to teach him something; his father, if he had been drinking, would say, "What the hell are you bothering to teach him for? He doesn't know nothing."

The man went through most of his life hiding his secrets. He learned to be a plumber; he married and started a family. He considered his inability to read even then his wife's children, but wife did all the paperwork around the house, read all the mail, handled all the correspondence.

A year and a half ago, the man lost a job because he could not read. The company he was working for required each employee to take a written test about safety procedures. The man knew the rules, but could not read the questions. The com-

pany allowed him to take the test over, but he didn't have a chance. He couldn't admit the real problem.

Out of work, he felt panic. He heard that a local community college was offering a nighttime course in reading improvement. He enrolled. But so early in the first evening he realized that the course was meant for people who at least knew the basics of reading. After a few minutes he approached the teacher after class.

"I know you can't read," the teacher said to him. "If you'd like to keep coming just to see what you can pick up, it's all right."

Instead, the man went to a dime store and bought a book called *Reading For* for twenty-three cents. The book was designed for pre-school-aged children. On the pages of the book were simple, colorful pictures of animals and trees and trucks, followed by the proper word for each picture. He looked at the pictures and tried to teach himself. He couldn't.

Finally, he sat down with his wife. "You know when I lost my job?" he said. And he told her he couldn't read.

Three years later, on television, he heard a public service announcement about private tutoring offered by the Literacy Volunteers of Chicago. He called up and explained about himself. The person on the other end of the line said that there were no suitable volunteers available at the moment. The man left his name.

Four months later, while he was out of the house, the literacy organization called. When the man arrived back at home, his wife said she had some news for him. "There's a teacher for you," his wife said. "Her name is Pat."

PATRICIA LORD, fifty-nine, remembers the first time he showed up at her door.

"He was such a nice man," she said. "The first I didn't realize how deep his problem was. But it soon became clear—he didn't even know the alphabet."

PHOTOGRAPH BY PATRICIA LORD



TODAY BELONGS TO JIM BEAM.

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"I'VE HAD TO PRETEND, ALL MY LIFE," HE SAID. "WHEN I WOULD GO INTO A RESTAURANT WITH PEOPLE FROM THE JOB, I WOULD HOLD THE MENU UP AND PRETEND TO BE READING IT."

So, twice a week, they started to work together. "He was incredible," Mrs. Lord said. "I do this for him, but he kept saying that if I ever needed any plumbing done, even if it was an emergency in the middle of the night, he would do it for nothing."

She taught him the alphabet. She taught him how to print letters. She taught him the first words other than his own name that he had ever known how to read or write.

"We work with reading cards," she said. "He picks out words that look interesting to him, and I'll teach him. One of the words he wanted to learn, for instance, was chocolate. He was fascinated by it because it was longer than most of the other words on the cards. So we learned it."

There are books scattered all over Mrs. Lord's home—*The Song of the Earth*, by Jonathan Schell; *Flowers*, by Leonard Bernstein; *Schindler's List*, by Thomas Kennedy.

"I tried to explain to him about the pleasures of reading," she said. "It's something he never knew. I've always gotten so much information and so much joy from reading, but when I try to explain that to him, it's almost beyond what he can imagine. When I was young I had a friend, and we'd go out together in the park and just read for hours, and talk about what we were reading. The idea of something like that seems to estrange him."

"I tell him that one of these days he'll be able to read a book," Mrs. Lord said. "That's far off in the future, though. I have a second-grade spelling practice book, and even that's way too advanced for him right now."

"But he's making progress. There's a list of about forty words that he knows now. When a lesson goes well, he is definitely pleased. He'll smile at the end of the session, and he'll give me tentative thumbs up, and we'll pat each other. Right? I can tell that he's feeling good about it."

IN THE time since he started studying with Mrs. Lord, the men have found a new job. His employers do not know that he cannot read, he is doubly afraid that they will find out and that he will be fired again. "I never found it hard anyone called a dummy," he said. "Back when I was a kid, I didn't like it. But I never heard up another kid for calling a boy a dummy."

"Let's face it, though, when you work construction, the others would be embarrassed to work with you if they knew you couldn't read—wouldn't they? If they found out about me, I think they'd make it hard on me. Some people get their backs like that."

He said it was losing the other job that convinced him he had to learn how to read. That, and something else.

"I've got a little granddaughter," he said. "I just want her to come up to me and say, 'Grandpa, we're here.' I can't do it. I already went through life not being able to read to my own children. I want to be able to read to my granddaughter."

He said he was proud of how far he had come in his life without knowing how to read. "I can make a blueprint and figure out how a whole building works," he said. "I built my own house. I think that's a pretty good accomplishment for a man who can't read. That, and going out for a my trade."

Still, he has always known how long the gap in his life was.

"All my life, I've wanted so badly to be able to read something," he said. "I've had to pretend, all my life. When I would go into a restaurant with people from the job, I would hold the menu up and pretend to be reading it. But I don't understand a word. I'd always ask the waitress what the specials were, and when she'd say them I'd choose one of them. Or I'd order something that I knew every restaurant had."

"It was something I thought about all the time, but who could you go talk to? Many's the time that I wished I could read something. But I knew there couldn't be too many people willing to help a person like me, so I just did my best to keep it a secret."

"I never writers a letter in my life. When the holidays came, it was very hard for me to pick out a card for my wife. I'd look at the cards, but I'd have no idea what they said. So I'd buy her a flower instead."

Now that he is studying with Mrs. Lord, he said, he can at least hope that things will change.

"I dream that before long I can really read something," he said. "It doesn't have to be a lot, but just to be able to read something from start to finish would be enough. Mrs. Lord tells me that once you start to read, it carries over all the time."

"It scares me that there's a possibility I can't do it. I'm fifty-three years old, after all. I just graduated with myself if I have a bad day here, and I make a lot of words. But when there's been a good day I'll feel great at the end of my lesson. I'll go home and tell my wife. I learned this word. Or I'll say, 'Teacher says I have good handwriting.' And then my wife and I will work on the spelling cards."

He said that, because he is working alone, sometimes he will have to stop taking lessons. "It kills me when that happens," he said. "But the construction business is pretty good right now, and

sometimes in the afternoon the boss will tell me that he needs me to work overtime. I can't tell him why I have to be here. So I'll go off to a pay phone and call Mrs. Lord and give her the bad news."

"I think about reading even when I'm at work, though. I'll be working, but I'll be muttering the alphabet in my head. I keep the spelling cards in my truck, and if it's time for a coffee break I'll go out there and work on my words."

He said that, before he started trying to learn to read, he never picked up a newspaper or a magazine. "Now I like to pick them up and look at them," he said. "I think to myself that maybe someday I can read them."

"And I'll go into a store now and pick up books. I'll pick up the ones that have covers that look interesting. And then I'll flip through them until I see some words that I know. Most of the pages are filled with words that I don't know. But then I'll see some words that Mrs. Lord taught me—so or at or the—and I'll stare at them. It feels so good to know them."

IT IS getting darker outside. The rain has been up since before dawn. His truck is parked outside Mrs. Lord's house, across the street from his own home.

At the dining room table, Mrs. Lord is helping him to write a sentence. "Let's try 'The cow is brown,' she says. "First word

the man checks his list of words. Then, on a clean sheet of paper, he writes "The."

"Good," Mrs. Lord says. "Next word, cow."

He checks his list and writes the word. "Very good," Mrs. Lord says. "Now it."

"That word he knows easily. He writes it. "Now brown," Mrs. Lord says.

He thinks for a second, then writes brown at the end of the sentence he has built.

"Rapid!" Mrs. Lord says. "End of sentence!"

The man looks up. "There is something very nice to pride in his eyes."

"You'll read with me when I write alone," he says. "The first letter I write is going to be so easy. I'm going to tell her how much I love her."

ON the cover of this magazine every month there is a slogan: "Men At His Best." Once in a while, when you really aren't expecting it, you find out what that means.

JOHN GREENE is a contributing editor of *Esquire* magazine and the author of *Good News and Merry Sorrow: A Father's Journal of His Child's First Year* (Morrow).

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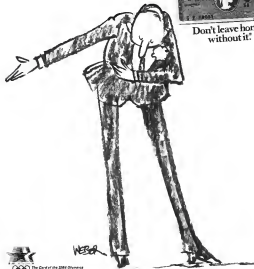
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ETHICS

BY ANTHONY BRANDT

A WOMAN OF CHARACTER

His mother's inner strength endures when the rest of life has slipped away

SOMETIMES PEOPLE do in such a way as to give their lives a particularly sharp cast or meaning. About three years ago, when I was living south of New York City, I had a friend named Carter Jones who was a free-lance photographer in his mid-fifties. Carter had twiddled centers when he was about thirty, been advertising in photography, and when I knew him he was still struggling and frequently unable to make ends meet. But he was a charming and lively man, a conversationalist, a man with as great a zest for life as anyone I have ever known. He didn't let his poverty keep him down.

Then his luck turned, he started getting more work, started making a fair amount of money. All this happened within a few months, as I remember, in the spring and early summer. In August he went on vacation with his family to the Jersey shore. While he was there he got an assignment somewhere in Connecticut. He decided, since for the first time in his life he could afford it, to charter a plane. By the time he got to the airport, he was shot, and he died the same day. When he returned that evening, the pilot raised the runway in a sudden fog, ditched the pilot and Carter were killed instantly.

Some time, wouldn't you say? More than a decade of struggle and sacrifice, then a few months of rewards, and zip, out you go. Don't ever think you have earned anything. Don't presume that you have turned a corner in your life and the worst is behind you.

And now my mother. My mother is eighty years old, and she has been dying for the last eight or nine years of Alzheimer's disease. She has been passing away cell by cell, working with excruciating slowness, withering—I hardly know how to describe it. For those who don't know what Alzheimer's is, it is a degenerative disease of the brain, cause unknown, which intellectual functions like memory

and speech are gradually lost, along with judgment and other bodily functions. But not all at once. So she can still see and hear, but no one knows whether she recognizes the people she sees or understands the words they say to her. She cannot speak herself, sounds come out, not language. It is no longer clear, in short, that a human being still lives in her. Sometimes she responds to you, sometimes she doesn't. And no one can say how long she will last.

With Alzheimer's you have lots of time to reflect on the meaning of a given life, on life itself for that matter, and I have asked myself all kinds of unanswerable questions since it became clear what was wrong with her. The manner of her dying has devolved to me particularly cruel because her own father had what was then called senile dementia, and my mother took her into our home, fed her, bathed her, changed her sheets when she leaked them, calmed her down when she hallucinated and

screamed at the air and tore off her fingernails, kept her and nursed her for six months until, half dead with exhaustion, miserable with guilt, she put her in a nursing home where she finally died. Then the relatives, the same ones who didn't once come to see my grandmother when she was in our house, never visited her in the nursing home, and had to wait what the old woman had become, ignored in my mother and criticized her viciously for "putting her away." Her own mother. So she had to deal with this too, and she never forgave them. Knowing this history, in any case, I have felt from the beginning that if there were any justice in the world this couldn't have happened to my mother, that she had paid her dues and deserved a better death, clean and quick and dignified, not this awful erosion, this endless looking away. On one journey, once again, that the worst is behind you.

But if there is innocence here, it is mine, not hers. She is, as far as anyone can tell, beyond helplessness. She shows little signs of any feeling, in fact, except a kind of childlike pleasure in seeing me on those occasions when she seems to recognize me. She is quiet, weak, but she lifts her head off the bed, her eyes light briefly, what may be a smile passes over her lips. She is also restless, so you can't be sure she's smiling. I am as gentle as possible with her. I talk to her. I stroke her head and arrange her blanket, doing all the practical things you do when there's nothing to be done. Very, of course, these visits are extremely painful, wounds that take months to heal. I do my best to be brave. Does she understand or care? I just don't know. She doesn't cry herself. If I can fit in any feeling at all, it is this kind of quiet, a pleasure, and a kind of underlying cheerfulness. From the first day in the nursing home she took what was happening to her cheerfully, never wistfully complained about it, and that cheer-



ALZHEIMER'S MOTHER, DAVID J. PHILLIPS

CLING TO THIS: MY MOTHER HAS ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE, BUT HER VERY ENDURANCE IS EVIDENCE THAT CHARACTER ENDURES; THAT A STRONG PERSON WILL HAVE MUCH TO BEAR, BUT WILL HAVE THE STRENGTH TO BEAR IT.

ness, which I find totally inexpressible, seems even now to survive.

I am not cheerful like her, but I can say that over the years she has been dying. I have lost some of my bitterness. I have come to see more in her death than my or anyone, though these things are there. She was a woman of character; she had enormous moral strength, and it is as if the moral strength had become physical, and rather brutalized and overbearing, and was keeping a beating, was keeping her lungs pumping air. As if the sheer momentum of her character were sustaining her. I realize this may be foolish, that I may be reading into the situation more meaning than it can support. But meaning itself may be foolish. Nothing guarantees that life is not a series of random events, accidents like the one that killed Carter James. I cling to this: my mother has Alzheimer's disease and will not die, but her very endurance is evidence that character endures, that a strong person will have a great deal to bear, but will have the strength to bear it.

What is character? This is that which we call Character, "some Emerson,"—"a reserved force, which acts directly by persistence and without reason." I have perceived in history evidence of my mother's character; certain events have become icons. The way she handled my grandmother's anarchy is one. Or a relative's pregnancy, how she handled the situation, never mentioning what she had done or who had taken the child. Or the simple, direct way she had goodbye to my father when he was dying: "It is been a good life," she said, leaving over and knowing him on the forehead. This icon, however only part of them, is one who was really impressive about her was what Emerson was allowing to, her presence, the sense of strength that radiated from her, how everyone simply took it for granted that she was a character. The young scholar who had the degenerate child was in awe of her. So was I, but with this difference: that I was her son and had to summon up the strength to defy her and look away from her, as sons must do. She could never understand that her own independence of spirit was the model for her sons', both of whom have always found it extremely difficult to work for other people. She wanted us to have safe, secure occupations and steady jobs with lots of benefits. But he is a self-employed lawyer, I am a self-employed writer, and that is partly because she would never ask for help from anyone, insisted on going her own way, being her own person, was always fiercely independent, and kept telling us that we were in good as the next

guy, probably better, and we'd better not forget it.

The odd thing is that all this fierce strength was a contradiction: it was not rational, not a given, but something she put to gather with what were evidently kinder reasons. It was obvious that she was a nervous person, how nervous I didn't find out until I was grown, when she told me she had had a "nervous breakdown" in her early twenties and had spent months in bed, drinking milk to "soothe the nerves," being shielded from loud noises, and not seeing anyone but the immediate family. Nevertheless, most at times by choice, but she was certainly constrained, she worked for her father in his New York office, lived at home, never traveled. Her world was small and safe, and she preferred it that way. Yet she could stand up to anybody, and she allowed us, my brother and me, to do things that clearly frightened her. We both learned as we matured we were young and we both had our own beliefs. By the age of twelve I was causing miles of water all alone in an eleven-foot creek box, capturing it from time to time, righting the boat, then nonchalantly sitting it back. I would be out for hours, and the whole time she would sit on the deck off the second floor of our cottage, gazing anxiously across the water, waiting for something terrible to happen. She knew, apparently, that it was good for us to do such things, and she found the strength to live with her fears and keep them to herself.

Perhaps that's what character is, learning to live with your fears. Part of it, in any case. Emerson wrote that "character denotes habitual self-possession, habitual regard to liberty and constitutional rectitude...." The act out of yourself, in other words, your life is your own, not the world's. That's another part. She had her own definition, her own code, which she never explained or wrote down but which was nonetheless unbreakable. If you started something, you finished it. Money and plans didn't count. You took your punishment. If you wanted something, you had to work for it, but if you needed something, you got it. Acts had consequences; you didn't get away with anything. You never said. You didn't ask for help except in extremes. You treated people with respect, but only family really mattered. Although it was seldom expressed, you were deeply and unconditionally loved. You were on time. You were honest. You didn't complain about your misfortunes. And you believed in yourself.

This empyrean code may be strange, the way you people like her. I have tried to build whatever strength I possess out of

my weaknesses. I have my independence from her, my self-direction, my willingness to work, my duty, such as it is, to bear up. I haven't done it all her way. Family never meant as much to me as it did to her. I've done plenty of complaining. I've talked to finish some of the major projects in my life. But she never let me doubt that I could do what I set out to do, that I had what it takes, and even as I know that some confidence in myself has survived, I don't think I could ever have developed it on my own. What was it Freud said? "A man who has been the indispensable favorite of his mother keeps for life the feeling of a dependent, that confidence of success which frequently induces self-satisfaction. She had no doubts, but those it is. Beneath the self-doubt, the balance, and the disappointments, I could hear her voice: "You're not a quitter. You can do it. I know you can."

In a sense character is all we have. The meaning of life is hidden from us. Other people are changeable, or we are. Property and celebrity are notoriously ephemeral. Safety and security elude us. We can acquire knowledge, but we can forget it too. Character alone is a true possession, and the source of wisdom, it alone truly lasts. It is the one valid measure of behavior. "There is no end," wrote Emerson, "in the sufficiency of character. It can afford to wait, it can do without what is called success, it cannot be deceived." But it is hard, she has shown us how hard. Character is life, said the Greeks; that means you have no one to blame but yourself. You cannot escape who you are. So her life and her death are all of a piece, the one is a consequence of the other. The stronger you are, the more you will have to bear. You cannot escape and there is no one to blame.

I think of what he happened to her, then, in emboldening. She showed me the very and how to accept my own particular fate, how to make it mine. How to embrace it. Without character you have few defenses; you drift downstream and bounce off rocks and are gashed for nothing. With it you endure. You become a man, like the lion and the honeycomb. "Behold," says the Book of Revelations, "these was a vision of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion." Strength dies, but it brings forth sweetness. Honey and meat waste away, but the mourning lions. Each time I see her I come away with more sorrow, but my grief is always greater than my losses. You get what you need. The more you have to bear, the stronger you will be.

ANTHONY MARANO is a New York Times writer in New York.



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Man At His Best

AGENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO QUALITY AND STYLE

SMART MONEY Taking a Flyer on an Oriental Rug



ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES H. HARRIS

In Solomon's job-*kyrie*'s Hebrew legend *The Carpet of Solomon*, the great, wise king discovers in a Persian marketplace a carpet of strange design, unworldly hues, and inscriptions in various unknown tongues. Summoning the merchant, the king demands to know more. "It is a magic carpet," the merchant explains. "It is woven with the name of God. It has powers unknown in any other carpet. Whoever sits upon this carpet may command it to transport him anywhere in the world, and it will do once they. There is nothing like it under Heaven."

But, wonders the wise Solomon, why will no one buy this wonderful treasure? "Mustn't buy it," says the merchant, "the price is sixty thousand pieces of gold." Soon enough the merchant has his sixty thousand gold pieces

ripe for close attention to certain Oriental rugs that have yet to take off.

After appreciating a rate of 20 percent a year for the past half decade or so, the price of all but the very rarest Oriental rug has leveled off. "We have an unusual situation today," says Larry Feldman, owner of the Rag Warehouse in Manhattan, which houses some three thousand fine Oriental rugs at any given time. "With the dollar so strong, European buyers have been priced out of the market. That means a big percentage of rugs is now available."

It also means that prices may be negotiable, which should in no way compare unfavorably at long-sold merchant's lagging over the can of the week.

Although prices may never again soar as they did a decade ago, the experts are convinced that the figure sits on their way up. Still, since Oriental rugs are better than others, not only in terms of the current price and the expected appreciation, but in the real value of the piece itself.

STEP ON IT

The earliest known rug, found by Russian archaeologists in a burial site in Turkestan, has been dated to the 6th century B.C. Marco Polo is thought to have brought back Oriental rugs from his travels, and with the opening of more trade routes during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, large numbers of these rugs made their way to Europe.

In the sixteenth century, rug making reached its peak with the Safavid dynasty, whose domains stretched far beyond the borders of present-day Iran. But these rugs are mostly gone now. Few Orientals are made of wool and cotton, and like any fabric, they disintegrate. All of the very

early rugs are now in museums, but the history of rug design may also be traced through paintings by artists such as Van Dyck and Holbein, who used them as backgrounds. Oriental rugs are divided into different categories depending on age—antique, dating from more than seventy-five years old, semi-antique, for rugs fifty to seventy-five years old, and old, for rugs that were made more recently than fifty years ago but are not brand-new.

The semi-antique category holds the most designers, Feldman believes. For example, a kilim (a flat-weave rug, as distinguished from a knotted or pile rug) from the Twentieth or Thirties is a good bet. These rugs were once considered so ordinary that they were used to wrap more expensive pile rugs for shipping. Today they are being recognized in their own right for their powerful geometric forms, their strong, usually dark colors, and their primitive beauty. Because they were woven on small looms, they are often found in small sizes—and at relatively small prices. You can buy a beautiful kilim for as little as \$200 for a three- by five-foot rug, up to \$3,500 for one measuring eight by eleven feet.

Chinese art deco rugs from the early 1930s are all the rage with decorators today, but the supply is far from depleted. The bold designs (usually horizontal) and striking color combinations (pink and brown, blue green and navy) are perfect for any modern decor. Better yet, you can buy a most valued rug in good to excellent condition for \$2,500 to \$3,500. And while that's twice as much as such a rug would have cost five years ago, the price, says Feldman, will probably double again in the next five years.

TAKE YOUR WEAVE

Oriental rugs are also classified by type, city or source. City rugs are closely woven (usually two hundred to one thousand knots to the square inch), are more formal looking, and usually bear a floral design. They are named for the cities (usually Persians) that are their factories for weaving fine rugs, and the names to look for are Kashan, Tabriz, Isfahan, Kirman, Sema, Gura, Sarraf, Nain, etc. Village rugs are coarser in weave, and the number of knots per square inch is not as important as the rich colors (usually earth tones) and designs (usually geometric shapes or stylized animals and figures). Rugs in this category are known by the village or tribal name—for example, Kazak, Shima, Afshar, Turkomen, Qashqar, and Baluchistan.

Thirty years ago antique rugs were median ornaments—something to tape your feet on before walking on the priceless formal rug in the main room. When they wore out, they were discarded, so the supply today is limited. These handmade rugs are hot items right now, says Feldman. To expect to pay \$5,000 to \$10,000 for an antique or vintage rug in good to excellent condition—and consider it a bargain.

Once you've reached a decision on rug and size, you've cracked a big part of the Oriental rug code, which some consider more difficult to master than the workings of the law. "That next..."

• **Check the colors.** After 1930, the dyes used were almost always synthetic. According to Feldman, that doesn't mean the quality is poorer, just different. He cautions that people like the orange coloring that two-toned and couched beavers were used in the dying of a red antique rug. But whatever the dye, a rug should show colors that have faded rather than bled. You should discover anything with colors that have run into adjoining designs.

• **Check for wear.** Although some wear is inevitable, pay

up any rug with obvious worn spots, defects in weave, or visible tears.

• **Check for fringes.** A rug should be flat on the floor, with no bumps or lumps. Make sure your fringes are done.

• **Check for dry rot.** If you bend a section of the rug inward and then hold again, it should hold like a handkerchief. Any sign of sound of tearing should put an end to consideration of that rug.

• **Check the fringe.** This is the most kind of repair to make—but like all other rug repairs, it should be done by an expert.

BEYOND THE FRINGE

King Solomon, for all his wisdom, committed the two most grievous errors: he bought on impulse and he bought from an unknown dealer. If you'd like to get into the Oriental rug game, start by doing some research. There are several good books that'll get you started. Among them are *Rugs to Riches* by Lorraine Baily (Plinthon Books, \$17.95), *Oriental Rugs: A New Comprehensive Guide* by Murray Silver (New York Graphic Society/Little, Brown, \$29.95), *Oriental Rug Primer* by Jean S. Jernigan Jr. (Garden of Eatin' Press, \$8.95), and *Oriental Rugs* (Cooper-Hewitt Museum Book of the Month Club, \$9.95). Then find a reputable dealer, someone who is well established in your city, who won't bid his best and steal more just when you realize that you haven't got a good deal. A free directory of top dealers throughout the country is available from the Oriental Rug Institute of America (296 North Street, Stamford, Connecticut 06904).

And a final word: "Don't look down your nose at new Orientals," advises Larry Feldman. "Remember that every old and antique rug was once new—it's the person who held on to it who retained the best reason for his investment. Just buy top of the line, be cautious. Then watch it riddle with age while it increases in value. That should give you a lift."

—Sue Berkman

CLASSICS The French Cuff



They're a damned nuisance—that much should be said of French cuffs from the start. It isn't enough that they're striving to get out; they are a nuisance to wear as well. They have a way of twisting around in the sleeve of your jacket, so you have to keep twisting them back. You can put your head down on a table and get your job a cuff hole into your wristbone. And about worse: that cuff hole was designed to become a mole on the skin.

There is, however, a saving grace: French cuffs—known as turnback cuffs or double cuffs in Britain—can be richly elegant when properly worn. But what is the right way to wear them? To begin with, they should be soft, not starched (unless they are part of a formal shirt, not the cuffs should be folded back rather than worn with a sharp crease at the edge. They should fit loosely enough so you can put on and take off your hands through them with the cuff links attached, but they should not be so loose as to look sloppy. Because of too-tight French cuffs in ready-made shirts: Turnback & Azzari's cuffs, for instance, are so slim that they're likely to be in room for a wristwatch. Because they are dressy, French cuffs are best worn with suits and blazers. But on this side of the Atlantic it's a bit much to wear them with tweed jackets.

There is, too, the choice of cuff links. In a way, cuff links are even more important than cuffs, because they say so much about the man who wears them, for which we can be grateful. They tell us at a glance what night otherwise takes hours or even weeks to find out: Big, bright, bejeweled cufflinks are no accurate reflection of the man in modest, tasteful ones. A hundred years ago Count Robert de Monaque could wear blue porcelain cuff links that matched the handle of his walking stick. Not today. Twenty years ago Lillian Russell wrote:

"Unless one is a matron or other personage entitled to a pedigree, there are well-defined limitations on what [jewelry] one may wear within the rather narrow boundaries of accepted feminine good taste." Cuff links that wrap around the outside of the cuff, cuff links that are bigger than a nickel, cuff links that are given as political gifts (embroidered with official seals and the like) are, almost without exception, too gaudy. It's a very wonder that the gift that landed presidential counselor Edwin Meese in trouble was a pair of hollow gold cuff links. As you remember, Meese kept them rather than turning them in, or throwing them away.

The classic, which is to say the best, cuff links are very plain, oval, square, circular, or lozenge shaped, in gold or sil-

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HONDA

Man At His Best

var. The tack should be the same as the front or a smaller version thereof, not just a small clip, after all, both sides of the cuff are visible. Wilkey's gold-toned cuff links were a notable modern classic.

The term "French cuff" is probably an American invention. In mid-nineteenth-century Britain, where they first appeared, a detachable single-layer starched cuff was used for formal wear and the soft turnback cuff for sportswear. Today both starched and soft turnbacks are for formal wear, barrel cuffs with buttons are for sportswear, and single-layer French cuffs are simply the mark of a cheap shirt.

At London's Hilditch & Key one is urged to have the

turned-back corner rounded so it doesn't crumple during use or fray too easily. Strutsiders Thorcher & Gilroy, also in London, have French cuffs with a kerosene returned from the early days; each cuff has a total of six buttonholes rather than four, so that on the second day of wearing, the folded edge can be turned under about a half inch. (This logic up the outer button holes with the two extra ones in the first button, and it also makes the sleeves a half inch longer.) "But no one actually does this today," a Thorcher & Gilroy salesman told me, obviously concerned that the very idea of a two-day shirt might reflect poorly on English tailors.

—John Seccombe

convinced that the action of such rods—most of which break down into four sections—is as good as, if not better than, the standard, two-piece models.

When fly rods were built from bamboo, it was felt that joints—those metal devices that join the rod sections—stiffened and interrupted the flow of a good rod. This may or may not have been true, but it made a certain kind of aesthetic sense. It seemed irrational to go across the grain any more than was absolutely necessary. In bamboo you would often see one-piece rods, while two-piece models were common and three-pieces were tolerated, but that was just about the limit.

Synthetic—fiber glass, graphite, boron—seemed almost to beg for experimentation by rod makers, who quickly discovered that fiber-reinforced plastics could actually improve the action of a rod by dampening the vibrations and speeding recovery. At the very least, well-made foreruns did not detract the action of a good rod. So makers began sewing their blanks in two and then sewing the halves in two again. And they began turning out some fine-looking pieces.

The most compact of the current travelers is the Hardy Strangler (Shimano). The case length of this rod is only fifteen inches, so you could carry the thing in the pocket of your overcoat. Of course, if you do, airport security would be sure to thank you when packing a bomb, and it probably wouldn't help much when you explained that it was actually a fishing pole. Still, the Strangler will fit in even a small briefcase, which makes it just the thing to carry along when you think you might go fishing.

The Strangler comes in three sizes. The smallest is seven feet long; when assembled, the largest is nine feet five inches. Weight runs from one and a half pounds to a half pound. The smallest handles a light trout line, and the largest will take a light bass line. But graphite rods are more forgiving than bamboo rods will

efficiently cast a line that is as far heavier or lighter than optimum. So your Strangler, in any size, would be versatile.

The Ovis Company makes a travel rod with versatility as its hallmark. The rod is called the All Rounder and while it is not as compact as the little Strangler, it will go on the plane with you. It packs to twenty-five inches and weighs three ounces. It is eight feet long when assembled, which is the length of a good bass fly rod. The designers at Ovis figure their rod will handle small streams and deep flies as well as big water and large fish. In a pinch you could even take it to salt water.

Another travel rod worth looking into is the Sage Executive, which packs to twenty-six inches and goes to eight feet three inches when assembled. It comes in two models, one designed for a light trout line and the other for a heavy trout/light bass line. Sage has been making some remarkable rods in the last few years and is the choice of most tournament casters. Personally, I'd rather be a Strangler than an Executive, but that is up to you.

The arrival of the travel rod should make the fisherman consider the possibility of all of his gear and inspire him to take along the minimum necessary tackle when there is even a chance he could get on the water. Once he has his rod, the mobile angler should invest in a pair of stacking-foot waders that will fold down to the size of a book. With them he will need some wading shoes, but there can be canoe models that take up little space space that a pair of running shoes. Sneels, even with spike soles, are small enough to pack in a sleeping bag, along with a couple of boxes of flies, some lures, and the necessary odds and ends for a few hours of impromptu fishing.

All said, the traveling man could probably get his fishing gear to the point where it takes up less space than his cosmetics and grooming aids, especially if he uses a hair dryer. Once on the road, he will truly be prepared for anything.

—Thomas J. Jackson

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FIRST-RATE Puckinga Rod



Business travelers have long known that if you can possibly avoid the baggage limit, you should. Your clothes only have to go to Pittsburgh once in a while to understand why carry-on is the way to go. Sportswear, however, has parity much had to check their equipment at the gate and hope for the best. I once had a baggage handler study the three slatman fly rod cases I was checking and ask me, "You gonna check them poles?" "They're fly rods," I said, trying not to be condescending. I didn't want him to take it out on the rods.

"That so?" he said and swapped a ticket around each

case, then pitched them, just as though they were pipes, to his partner fifty feet away. The baggage handler looked at me and probably misjudged the third and let it fall for a two-base error. The "poles" broke the damage, but it could just as easily have been the rod. Well, now there is relief. Traveling rods, which once were to real rods what stapled trousers were to real pants, have come into their own. You can pack them into your under-the-seat luggage or even into your attaché case. Cruder hands than yours need never touch them, and at the end of the flight you'll know right where to find them. Furthermore, some experts are

SPECIAL PLACES

Rooms at the Inns



The porch of the County Inn in Princeton, where guests relax after dinner

Country inns are as much a part of the local tradition in New England as bell towers and white clapboard churches. But choosing a country inn can be like playing roulette: what one person calls "rustic charm" is often a polite term for drab rooms, lumpy beds, and seaward plumbing. Should you travel like you to New England this year—in a limo, "leaf peeper," or simply to get away from it all—here are five inns that have received kudos to match the beauty of their lands and the wisdom of their system settings.

STAFFORD'S IN THE FIELDS

However you get there, be sure to arrive at Stafford's in the Fields in time for dinner. Kenneth Stafford is a laced-to-cork cook, whose five-course dinners are renowned throughout the Mount Washington Valley. At exactly six-thirty you will be ushered into a candlelit dining room, where tuxedoed waiters, embossed on ceiling, and a blazing fireplace recall the bygone age captured in the paintings of Grandiose Menets. But in vent Stafford's for the food alone would give short shrift to the spiritual substance of the rolling fields, coral forests, and Mount Chocoma, which surround it. The twenty-globed stars

looms, built in 1776, has twelve guest rooms—one with a circular fireplace in New England with country antiques. (My favorite: a room with a claw-foot bathtub and wicker fire-side chair.) But, perhaps crisscross the beds and woods, and Fred Stafford has a choice on hand for peddling around on Lake Chocoma. There's drama at the Barn-station's Summer Theatre in nearby Danvers. But the best scenery of all is strung on a rack on the porch and doing absolutely nothing.

Stafford's in the Fields is located off Route 113 in Chocoma, New Hampshire (603-323-7766); rooms cost \$90 to \$75 per person, breakfast and dinner included; open summer, fall, and winter.

SNOWVILLE INN

Seen from the porch of the Snowville Inn, Mount Washington looms almost close enough to touch. But the breathtaking view of the Presidential Range is only part of what makes this secluded inn such a draw for the weary wayfarer. High on Frost Mountain, the inn offers the stimulation of clay-court tennis, fishing, and cross-country skiing on 150 wooded acres, as well as the tranquility of a blazing hearth, a back-lash parlor, and an award-winning English garden

Built in 1936 as a summer home, the Snowville Inn belongs now to Ginger and Harold Blomberg, a pleasantly inebriated couple who live there with four dogs, seven cats, a rabbit, and a pig named George. (The quarters are called George's Mansions.) The Blombergs are religious and deeply rooted in the lighting specialist, she is a hairdresser—and they treat their guests less like customers than like members of an extended family. There are 14 fourteen guest rooms, six in the main building (the most two are over the dining room) and eight in a converted barn, all with private bath. The dining room boasts the remains of old lamps and mid-century modern tables, but, not to mention handmade soaps, locally baked breads, and complimentary eggs Benedict and champagne on Sundays. Other attractions include a fully grand piano, a room filled with hats, and a screened-in wrap-around porch facing the Presidential Range.

The Snowville Inn is on Frost Mountain Road in Snowville, New Hampshire (603-447-8818); rooms cost \$55 to \$85 per night per person, breakfast and dinner included; open May/June/July to October 30 and November 15 to March 30.

INN AT SAWMILL FARM

The setting is rural New England, but there is nothing rustic about the Inn at Sawmill Farm in West Dover, Vermont. After all, how many country inns have high tea from a silver service, serve their guests with Galien chocolate, and stock a library of thousand-bottle wine cellar?

Sawmill Farm is the brainchild of urbane Atlantic City architect Bradley Williams, who with his family purchased and renovated a two-hundred-year-old barn overlooking the steeped village of West Dover. Now, each of the twenty-two guest rooms has a bathroom bath, and the spacious "cottages" all have fireplaces; the logs are already lit, needing only your match to light them. The inn's greenhouse

dining room filters the elegance of flickering candlelight back of into the house spectrally; gardens are requested to wear a jacket. In the lounge there is a gleaming copper bar and antique floorboards—don't miss the bloody marys prepared with Jane Wilson's lifeless homemade tomato paste.

As for a luxury retreat, Sawmill Farm has swimming and tennis on the grounds. It's a little like being brought to the kitchen and saying, "any fish you catch in the inn's private trout pond. To ensure tranquility, the innkeepers bar children under ten.

The Inn at Sawmill Farm is located off Route 500 in West Dover, Vermont (802-664-6132); rooms cost \$180 to \$200 per night per person, breakfast and dinner included; 100 rooms during the season and from Christmas to New Year's, deposit required with reservations, open year-round, except for November 25 to December 11.

THE HERMITAGE

At the end of a long dirt road, on a high, rolling hill in southern Vermont, stands a rambling farmhouse you may see soon in the movie *A Chorus Line*. This is the Hermitage, the personal fiefdom of dog breeder, game-keeper, music maestro, and complete house. McGovern III, one of New England's most colorful innkeepers. Built circa 1870, the Hermitage belonged for many years to Bertie Eastman Barry, editor of the formidable *Social Register*. Since acquiring the estate thirteen years ago, Jim McGovern has added bird pens (sheltering fifty-five different species of game birds), a carpenter's workshop (which produces up to seven hundred gallons of sprig a year), and a spectacular twenty-five-thousand-bottle wine cellar. Game birds are a specialty in the candlelit dining room, as are the wine and music juries served at breakfast.

The inn has sixteen rooms, ten with fireplaces, all with private bath. The spacious rooms at the new wing are filled with

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curly antiqua, some of which include Federal Period furniture and vintage hand-blown glass. On special request, McGovern will provide the birds and does for hunting. Hospitality here is very much *à la carte*, so don't expect a full-on dinner to rush out to help you with your bags.

The Hermitage is on Coldbrook Road in Wilmington, Vermont (tel. 802-464-3547), rooms cost \$70 to \$80 per person per night, breakfast and dinner included, a deposit is required, open year-round.

COUNTRY INN AT PRINCETON

In 1896 Worcester industrialist Charles Washburn built a thirty-five-room mansion on a twenty-acre estate overlooking the village of Princeton, Massachusetts. Two winters ago Don and Nanette Plourde, his son and daughter, the last in his lineage, purchased the grand old structure, restoring it to its original Queen Anne Victorian splendor. To preserve the original grandeur of the Washburn mansion, the Plourdes have limited their lodging space to six over-the-parlor suites, each with period furnishings. The Hermitage State has a guest bed and a massive mahogany bedroom set; the Waterloo Suite is furnished in wicker and chestnut and overlooks the restaurant.

THE SEASONED COOK An Education in Ice Cream

The way I remember it, it was my father and Uncle Charlie, who always integrated the ice cream making. It would be late in the afternoon and they'd be sweetly ironing laundry in the summer sun. They'd be standing out in the side yard of my aunt and uncle's house, the sleeves of their cotton work shirts rolled up above sunny forearms. My father would use just a little forward and be smiling, looking off into the sky. Charlie

would lift his tilted cap and mop his face with a handkerchief. "I believe some knowmad ice cream would taste pretty good tonight," he'd say.

"I believe so," my father would answer. They'd ask the women to start mixing things up, and off we'd go to the kitchen.

We'd ride to Uncle Charlie's gray Skateboarder, not standing on the front seat between the two men, obviously, in those innocent days, to the porch of traveling ice-cream-belt. The

grounds and garden. All the women have antique quilts and sewing cases where pins lie on easy their Continental blouse in a pinery.

Dining is a particular pleasure at the Country Inn, where chef Frank McCalland, former of Boston's pantheon L'Espresso restaurant, serves crab-pot-and-wild-mustard-reviled, soured with caramelized onion, and fruit tarts made with native New England berries. For more privacy, there are three separate dining rooms, including the "library," which can be reserved for parties as small as two.

Historic Princeton, a once-popular Victorian resort, retains the grumpy coziness, town hall, and church of a quintessential New England village. Nature fully will appreciate the proximity of the Massachusetts State Audubon Society and two-dozen-plus antique Washburns.

And the newly refurbished Washburns Mountain Ski Area and State Recreation offers year-round recreation, as do local service shops.

The Country Inn at Princeton is located off Route 31 in Princeton, Massachusetts (tel. 617-694-9930), rooms cost \$95. Continental breakfast included, open Wednesday to Sunday year-round, no-children under twelve.

—Steven Ruchkin



icehouse was over in south Canton (Kentucky), all the way through town on Main Street. On the way we'd stop in a grocery store and pick up some rock salt.

"Come have some cream with us tonight," my father would say to the man who sold the salt to us.

"Believe I might," he'd answer, but he never did.

At the icehouse, the men wore white shirts with the long sleeves rolled down, and dark gloves. The doors of the long building were heavy with insulation. Belows of chilly mist poured out when the men went inside for blocks of ice. My father and Charlie would stare at the ice. Later I would learn that the men used to make the ice cream with hand-cranked cream. Perhaps that's why Daddy and Charlie watched so carefully, but probably I think they just enjoyed the rusty feeling of standing around, watching a machine work.

When the ice was brought in thick brown paper sacks, we raced to get back home before it could melt and stick together. The women would have the machine ready and it was the only preschool. It was always vanilla. For parents, there is no other flavor.

THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY

We made the ice cream out in the backyard behind the screened porch that served as a dining room in the summer. The afternoon would be just about over—some daylight left but the sun down behind the trees enough that we didn't have to worry about the heat of

its direct rays. Daddy would turn the crank while Charlie looked on the rock salt and ice. It was first a couple of inches of ice, then a handful of rock salt spread evenly around, and so on in those proportions until the freezing mix reached the bottom of the freezer can lid.

"Don't get it too high," my mother would warn. "Use time we made some cream that was the thickest, yellowest cream you've ever seen, and we could hardly wait for it to get ripe. But when we tasted it, it was all heavy from rock salt that had seeped in."

That disaster was before my time, though, and Charlie never got the salt and ice too high when I was a child.

Time stretched out forever before my father finally said, "I think it's about right. You try a taste or two, Charlie, and see what you think."

My uncle would give the hand crank a few hard turns for gas of measure and agree. They'd lift the can out carefully and wipe the outside clean with a towel. My aunt would take it to the big round table on the porch, where she'd open the lid and lift out the paddle for me. I'd sit there, privileged child, leaning over a dinner plate, licking all that creamy lusciousness from the paddle.

Meanwhile, Charlie finished the batch out of the freezer, and she'd get the can of ice cream back in, pack it down with more ice and rock salt—an inch of ice to a handful of salt. Then they'd cover the top of the freezer with a thick layer of newspaper and wrap the whole thing in an old quilt and

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Man At His Best

have it for an hour or two to ripen. O sweet experience of adulthood! I could never tell you why the ice cream I'd lugged off the paddle wasn't good enough just as it was, but they were content to sit on the porch, eating green beans, corn, tomatoes, and cucumbers, drinking ice tea, and enjoying delight.

It was dark by the time the ice cream was ready. The supper dishes were washed, and the fire was thick with the symmetrical rhythms of crackles. Aunt Sue took out the big fat bowls with aprons showing in the glow and laid pinwheel flowers around the edges. Everyone but me got a big spoon. Everyone got a huge mound of sweet yellow cream.

Homemade ice cream was never meant to be served the next morning, and we ate until the cans were clean and we were aching.

"Homemade cream," my father would say as he put down his dish. "Now, boy, that's something."

He was right. This recipe makes excellent homemade ice cream, good enough to call back the old memories even when made in an electric freezer, which is what my family now uses.

Beat two eggs lightly, then gradually add one and a quarter cups of sugar. Beat until stiff. Add three cups of whipping cream and two cups of whole milk, three teaspoons of the best vanilla money can buy, and a quarter teaspoon of salt. Pour the mixture into the freezer can and chill in the refrigerator for at least fifteen minutes. Then put the can in the electric freezer and never rock salt up to the lid of the can in their proportions: two inches of ice covered evenly by three tablespoons of salt.

Turn for twenty to thirty minutes. The motor will stall when the cream is frozen. (If your machine doesn't shut off automatically, turn it off immediately to avoid engine damage.)

Remove the can from the freezer, the chills from the can, and put the lid back on securely. Drain the excess brine from the freezer, resubmerge the can, and pack it with more ice and salt in these proportions: one inch of ice topped by a large handful of salt. Cover with newspapers and a blanket and let ripen for one to two hours.

You'll need about five pounds to help you eat this in one sitting. —Rocin Lundy



of my life. I want to drink well tonight, and by virtue of my professional task, I have an interest in other people's doing the same.

Wines tend to turn as inward, of course, to focus our attention on concerns that are immediate and confining, and to test our capacity for appreciating things that are strange and new. (In a city where, always have been, cowboys, dense air, back prices, long lines at the bank, and trouble getting from place to place: this is my life, and the harshness of it is something I seem to relish.) The way a lot of people have crumbled their lives with suffering agents—country weekends, beach houses, that sort of thing—I haven't cottoned to much, and the small seems abstract in such an attitude shown up in my drinking, too. On my own time I opt ordinarily for the straight and the strong, and maintain a mild on-ferance with the unconvincing slings and costumes and fumes and patches that bartenders, waitresses, and other analogs are forever presenting, things that expand the territory of adterity and make drinking palatable for a lot of people who wouldn't enjoy it otherwise.

Recently I went to the Caribbean for the first time, which, as everybody knows, how that I know it, is a terrific place, very different from Manhattan. The golfers, it turns out, are pretty accurate. Among other things, the islands are pits-colada land, partially because the ingredients grow on trees. Bartenders down there, who whip them up

with their eyes closed, have the advantage of fresh coconut milk and pineapple that they can cut open themselves and throw whole chunks into a blender. (It was up north, though, that I learned that the rum content should be about a third of the whole, and that tugging the frothed, complicated drink with a splash of cherry brandy yields a tartly appropriate pizzazz.) But primarily, pine-coladas are just so delicious available in the around-the-clock pattern of being-tourists, calypso music, and warm breezes. Sweet and salty, a mother's milk for vacationing children. What a pleasant discovery it adds up to: You could almost live this way. People do, I guess.

To get back to literature. We read for some of the same reasons that we travel—in hope, to be stolen away for a while from our accustomed habits and losses, to be startled into an appreciation of the variety of things. In the final line of "The Sorrow of Gin," a despicable man whose life has become tyrannically encumbered by suburban routine, wonders, when his young daughter runs away, "How could he teach her that house wasn't home, was the best place of all?" He's a pitiable character, and the story does what Cheever was so good at doing: finding the sorrow in straightforward people.

When it is right, fiction reminds us that though lives are small, life itself is large.

This fiction issue is a great thing. And pine-coladas are pretty good, too. You need it here first. —Bruce Weber



THE DRINKING MAN The Piña Colada: A Short Story

Esquire's salute this month to the Piña Colada has put me in mind of the pine colada, the tropical concoction made with pineapple juice and coconut extract and single portions of thick rum. The connection between the pine and the bottle is well established in our literature—Jake Barnes and alcohol; the champagne cocktail at Gatsby's place; the wickerly Benji Jack Burdick and his utterance of battle of bourbon in *After the King's Men*; Holden Caulfield's pathetic Scotch and sodas on the crucial night of his young life (Babbalanja's cool, icy, delicious).

the latterly corny old gin and tonic in John Cheever's "Sorrow of Gin"—but the pine colada is a beverage that suffers from a lack of serious documentation. It's conspicuous in our world of letters by its absence, and I may as well admit that this colada has been openly neglected of it so well.

In a famous John Cheever story called "The Sorrow of Gin," a character delivers the rueful confession, "I worry about drink more than most people," and as great fiction is wont to do for all of us from time to time, I find, as "The Drinking Man," that this is a line that plays a part in the narrative



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SUMMER READING

AN INTERVIEW

How Writers Live Today

by Rust Hills

INTUITION IS ART AND ART IS THE TRIUMPH OVER CHAOS (NO LESS!) the late John Cheever wrote in one of his short stories, and in another he implied that the challenge set the modern fiction writer was "to celebrate a world that lies spread out around us like a bewildering and stupendous dream." The way in which change itself has become the only constant in contemporary society was once thought to be the enemy of the novelist, who was supposed to depict workings of character and event within an ordered world of manners and mores in a stable framework of social class. Contemporary American writing has met this challenge, triumphing with a variety of fictional modes and narrative strategies unprecedented in any kind in any time.

That there is no particular or peculiar manner or method of writing that can be pointed to as representing "American Fiction Today" is the greatest indication of our present strength. We have not only the strongly individual voices of our major, internationally recognized, "main" authors, but also a great variety of others. Some of our best authors write in different sorts of "high-concept" modes, finding deeply serious humor the best way to depict contemporary American life; some are in the American tradition of "domestic hard-boiled" writers, who show that adventure is still part of literature; some are "post-modernists," who often use the strategy of "meta-fiction," ironic (by being about fiction) takes on an ironic deconstruction; some are "downside novelists," reinvigorating the strain of American naturalism; some are at work on monumental "Epic" novels; some are creating what is called "the short-story renaissance." All this achievement is occurring simultaneously in this country.

Consider the works in progress of some of these authors, described on pages 153-159 of this issue. We have today at least a handful of authors of distinctive talent from whom we have received much and can expect yet more. This is—a sure sign in itself—is a literature rich and varied period in American literary history.

IS THIS GENERALLY UNDERSTOOD? Well, sometimes it is, and sometimes it isn't. The vicissitudes of the contemporary American achievement relates against the background of it. It is as if we can't see all those trees, just because there's one central forest. Not only is there no central tendency in American writing, there is also no central place where it occurs. Whenever there is a little chapter—an anecdote happens in Key West or in Montana or on the South Park of Long Island—one is almost startled to see five or ten writers together. We have no equivalent of eighteenth-century London, or

Paris in the Twenties. New York City does not seem to be a congenial place for writers to live and work, despite the fact that the publishing industry is centered there.

If fiction is art, as Cheever said, publishing is certainly business. Art in other forms is also involved with business, of course, but the relationship between books and business publishing on the one hand and literary fiction writing on the other is an especially peculiar one, because the publishing business is also involved with writing that is not fiction and with fiction that is not art. Publishing literary fiction is, in terms of marketing, the least important part of most book publishers' business, yet for the writer, getting published is a very important indeed. This situation is so acute that it has always been, but recent events have aggravated matters.

What has happened to American book publishing in the last twenty-five years is alarming, but it is so well known it can be left to the fiction editors of *ESQ*.

presented in a series of catch phrases. First came the message, so there were fewer "houses." Then the corporate takeovers. The unknown, menacing blue-chippers interested only in profits. No longer a family business. No longer a profit, not a profession. Good editors presented to be fed business executives. The demise of the small bookshop. The book as a commodity, for the big book seller at the expense of the promising first novel. The mass-market paperback talk waging the hard-cover dog. Hard-cover and paperback houses pushing the author out. To make publishing a simple process. Editors going from house to house. No loyalty to an author anymore. No loyalty back from the big authors who go where the big bucks are. Too many literary publishers. Too few. Too low to flourish. Free advertising. No authors able to survive without advances. To new, new.

These circumstances are very debilitating if you're an owner of literary talent. Assume you write for two or three years as a first novel and as an editor at a commercial publisher so assumes you talent that you can't get a publisher to take your work. You have no choice at all. Actually there's no that involved in the board's decision, say that they have (not revealed) to losing a more or less calculable amount of money. The amount they've lost is in more than the \$3,000 that you've lost. The publisher's staff, your work, office rent, paper costs, typesetting, warehouse space, overhead of all sorts goes into their figures—these circumstances will be applied. The more copies they print of your book, the more they lose. The more they print, the more they lose. They lose, they lose, they lose. So they don't push it, and they do lose, and it'll be that much harder to convince the editors (and it's often a choice and a loss) to make the book. The source of it is the heart's prediction of stories.

And yet somehow in the face of it all, literary stories and promising first novels still manage to get published. At virtually every publishing company there are editors—some young, some old—who are looking for the next big thing. They are not afraid to take risks. They are not afraid to get around the system, releasing neglected, contemporary novels in "traduquy" paperback series of classics; successfully soliciting pocket blurbs and e-house sites; embracing for a new novel of merit, or for a third novel "traduquy" book by an author they still adore. They are not afraid to preserve their manuscripts, keeping those landed and encouraged despite everything.

In fact, everyone involved in the quality issue is as supportive as possible, in the business of art there is always dedication and caring. Individual literary agents, whether on their own or as part of the big broadcast agencies, will work hard to develop accounts in a new young clients' work, even though there is often no opportunity

By then, place their work profitably. Magazine publishing is especially discouraging in this regard: few new categories publish fiction, and the older ones abound it. There are now not enough magazines to publish the relatively high literary fiction to count on the future of a single hand. Editors of literary quarters and life magazines work conscientiously and well-served to try to take up the slack. State and national governments support grants-in-aid to help these magazines survive. The National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Council of Literary Magazines, and there are grants for writers from the National Endowment for the Arts and foundations like the Guggenheim Fellowship and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. But the magazine industry and its institutions are always embattled critics, critics, critics.

But the real money and the exciting action are clearly elsewhere—in television and especially in films—and good writers are always being rotated away from what they should be doing by producers and directors who "love" their work. Their films are made with the best will in the world, but they usually end with the worst results—nothing ever finally comes of it. Movies are an even bigger enemy to the literary writer than big business.

So, despite all the good efforts and goodwill, the literary publishing business has become increasingly difficult for writers and publisher alike. Journalists writing about the writer's life usually single out an author who has already attained a certain degree of celebrity. The picture is misleading: farms in Connecticut, ranches in the West, movie stars living in seclusion in agate, phoning in deals with long numbers, truck loads of cattle to Kansas, and so on. There are actually no more than a dozen literary agents who live—far from traditional economic writers for hire—than the other three or four who have a long list of celebrities. Yet we continue to have more new writers developing their own beliefs, and some of them are achieving a success. That is due to patronage from another quarter.

ALMOST UNCHALLENGED in all these creations of the last quarter century has been the rise of a countervailing force, one that is almost entirely beneficial to the taste of modern literary fiction. I am speaking of the growing role in all the processes of contemporary literature of the colleges and universities of America. If one but closely looks at old and books, one sees that this is no longer the least part of the means by which the tastes of the nation are measured, but rather the sole means. It is the universities that support the entire structure of the American literary establishment—and, moreover, casually determine the nature and shape of that structure.

First of all, it should be recognized that our colleges and universities provide the major financial support for the great majority

of American writers today. Even socialist authors often find their income greatly unaided by the universities. A sensibly well-known writer (fifteen or forty books, say) can make \$1,000 to \$2,000 a year. A writer who is an avocaturist to several local magazines, goes to a party, meets some students, and maybe attends a class the next morning—and a really well-known writer can command substantially more. A professional writer's career can range from \$200 to \$200,000 a year. A writer can, and maybe another class for a short time at a university—maybe ten, twelve, or thirteen weeks. There are not corporate salaries, if course, but it is the kind of money paid to be quite successful. And if you're a writer, you don't mind if they will also often be paid well simply to be "in residence" at a college—no classes to teach, just to be "available" to selected students of your art. A sensibly well-known writer regularly employed at a university (and a university is a place, not without big charms of the writing department) will certainly make what an editor of a publishing company will make—say, forty to sixty—well above though not equal to salary, but it's pretty good shape whenever he is out there, all at some campus where he can be seen, and he's in the post. This is one reason American writers are scattered all over the country, and it's the reason that even though you only get paid \$5,000 or so by the publisher (as just I've noted you spend three years writing, you can't get paid until you're published), in compensation for a good job, if you do mind teaching writing for a living.

The teaching of writing—something that many still doubt can actually be taught—has grown from an occasional writing course in the 1950s to a virtual obsession at some of the most-taught colleges on campuses here. Subjects as writing have become so large that at some universities enrollment in the writing program far exceeds enrollment in the liberal arts program. At some schools one may take creative writing courses for all four of their undergraduate years and then go on to graduate school in writing.

It is the growth of the graduate programs that is both most remarkable and most worrisome. In the 1950s, for example, the Stanford writing fellowship and the Iowa Writers' Workshop had twenty-old years ago, now there must be at least a hundred such programs, of various sizes, ranging from the great universities that attract a whole city of students to be writers on an annual basis to the new ones and adjuncts that

How it works typically is that twenty or more graduate students are enrolled in a two- or three-year course of instruction, primarily in writing, but also including literature courses and other requirements that vary from place to place. At the end,

the states will have an M.P.A.—Master of Fine Arts—which, because it is a "terminal" degree (unlike the ordinary M.A., which is considered a step toward the Ph.D.), is considered sufficient accreditation (with some publications) for him to apply for a full-time job teaching elsewhere. Instead of the standard M.A. thesis, he will have submitted for departmental approval a collection of stories or a novel. Specially typed and bound, this "book" is deposited in the university library, where it exists in a strange limbo, accepted but not published.

The key to writing is actually "taught" or "taught" in by the workshop method. The writers gather in a seminar room—for three hours, usually, Wednesday afternoon or evening, say. The seminar staff will be present, but the seminar is run by whoever's handling the class—at the end of the table. At the undergraduate level the teacher may read aloud the student's work to be discussed, or the student himself may read it. In the more advanced workshops the manuscript will be read aloud by the student, and then distributed to the other students to be read. The writer whose work is on the table that week gets an hour or an hour and a half of intense discussion—an immediate individual and group reaction to what he's put before writing on. Sometimes the advice is given, but it's not meant to be weighty. But usually a group of people whose good and thought to be developed, and what's work and ought to be dropped or fixed. If the writer-teacher is creative, usually, further discussion of the work can follow during office hours. When you consider how many headlines composed from or lead in by the writer, it's not surprising that the seminar, just as it is, is a difficult. Student learn how to criticize tactfully and constructively, and they are virtually forced to produce work for their own reason the workshop process. Sometimes this pressure causes submission of work that is not a writer, but that happens rarely and rarely just the writing of concerns.

During a period of his graduate fellowship the student will usually—as a T.A.,¹² or teaching assistant—teach freshman comp and perhaps introductory creative writing. For this he will be paid—\$800 a month, say—and that's how he's supported during these developing years as a young writer writing, studying writing, and teaching writing. There must be a thousand or more superb young American writers at some various of the universities now. It is an extent and degree of support for new talent that is unprecedented.

be selective in this sort of apprenticeship that directors of the elite programs—with adoptions or a dozen and a half places to be filled each year—can accept only about one in six of the applications they receive. In addition to the usual vitae, transcripts,

and letters of recommendation, applicants send manuscripts. Most program directors feel an important part of the program is sifting through these manuscripts to select who will be in the workshop the following year. In a way, these are the people—the directors and the faculty of the writing programs—who are now not just doing the first sorting out, but making the first determination of who the American writers of the future are to be.

Moreover, these program directors and the visiting writers who teach intermittently, are in the broad media industry scouting, on a simple good-will basis, for the editors and publishers of their acquaintance who are looking for talented new writers. This is really how a new writer is first "discovered" now, through the process of recognition and recommendation by the writing process.

Besides these programs are available and successful, as far as writing goes—and because they throw off as a sort of by-product great numbers of qualified writing teachers—they grow and they proliferate. No one escapes this now. This system is totally unknown in Europe, but is pervasive here. There can scarcely be an American writer in his thirties who hasn't been involved in a university writing program somewhere, some time in his life.

Time is an additional way—perhaps ultimately an even more important way—that academia affects the structure of the American literary establishment. I refer to the process of “canonization,” the way in which a work of fiction or an author of fiction came to be considered as a classic. This process used to take time, but now the universities, which in recent years scarcely considered a work of literature and history a hundred years after its conclusion, are saturated with what’s new. Canonization in courses have a tremendous effect on all students, not only the writers of text, and they attract the more important than any other literature courses. Course titles say *why*—Structure and Symbol in the Modern American Novel, The Woman’s Voice in Contemporary Fic-

hand-covers-the-bookish has some valid insights, especially because newspapers and magazines traditionally review only books that appear in hard-cover, and some value alternatives because libraries preserve hard-cover copies. But availability in paper is now the important thing—not just a mass-market paperback edition that's on and off the racks in a matter of months, but in "trade paper," part of a regular backlog that's kept in stock. This is because the professor listing books for his course cannot expect students to find "hard-cover" options. It's much less to be taught, and to be taught it has to be in paper. As all writers know now, *hard-cover* is like *out of cover*.

But there are still many ways colleges and universities affect the Mersey establishments. They provide the otherwise missing dimensions of "community" by sponsoring a wide range of activities, from the symphony of visiting artist-teachers, the crowd of reading programs, and the summer writing conferences—virtually all of which are sponsored from computers and under their aegis. And though colleges and universities are not the only publishers (albeit all are edited from a campus) and little magazines, they provide a far broader market for short stories than the national magazines can. This publication, therefore, is a place where teachers can be heard in the first place, the second, or, promoted, granted tenure, and so on. It is an example of the universities providing one another with the accreditation—publication that they themselves are not able to provide. It is also the way that university presses, which cannot publish only scholarly works not attractive to a commercial publisher, will now publish novels by faculty members. Finally from another aspect of a regular university press, the publishing of the universities now—first by leading writers, then supporting them, and now beginning to publish them, as well as making the financial payments on their—acquire and publish the works of the writers of the "best" of literature ever.

As a UTHERS' singular contribution made by the colleges and universities is in providing what Morrison fiction serves really to need: *most readers*. Once Vande Velde was doing fiction to the effect that Americans now read serious fiction, only when they are required to, in college, and there is, sadly, truth in that. Contemporary American fiction is in a fine shape—except if lacks the readership it deserves. This issue is an attempt to correct that, and to bring to fiction that special reader who is an *Amateur*, freely, a *peacock*, is capable of appreciating freshly wrought literature as *be it* of recognizing *excellence* in any sort of life. In this issue, we are going to show just the force and vitality of contemporary American writing, and the joy it is to read it. **A**

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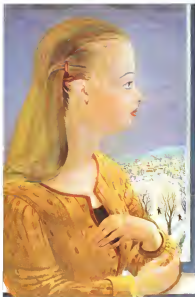
none and Tim and Moby are looking at boarding schools. Moby is the applicant, thirteen years old. Anne and Tim are the mom and dad. This is how they are referred to by the admissions directors. "Now if Mom and Dad would just make themselves comfortable while we steal Moby away for a moment. Moby is staying away and Tim and Anne drink coffee. There are brownie debates on a plate. Colored slides are slipped upon a screen showing children excitedly learning and growing and carting through the seasons. These things have been explained. Rather, it's clear that's what they're getting at. The children's faces blur in Tim's mind. And all those autumn leaves. All those laboratories and playing fields and bell towers.

It is winter and there is snow on the ground. They have flown in from California and rented a car. Their plan is to see across New England boarding schools in five days, locked into from the admissions building. Tim gives at them. They are lovely and restrictive. They are formed and then they vanish. Tim looks away. Anne is sitting on the other side of the room, puzzling over a mathematics problem. There are sheets of problems all over the waiting room. The sheets are to keep parents and kids on their toes as they wait. Anne's foot is bent fiercely beneath her as though broken. The cold, algebraic problems are presented as

BY JOY WILLIAMS



JOY WILLIAMS LEAN UP IN BARNES AND NOB LIVES ON A FLORIDA BEACH, ONE CASE OF USE IN A WINTER DURING THE 1980s. AS DID EVERETT LINDSEY, FORMER WOLFE BROWNE FINE, AND OTHERS IN A LOT OF WILSON. LIVING THE AMERICAN BEACH OF GREEN-LIKE PASTORALISM, HER NOVEL SHOWS THEM TUNING YOUNG MOST OVER A DEAD SENTENCES THAT COULD ANCHOR THE LITERARY EXPRESSION OF A TRUSTED TIME. BUT WILLIAMS' NOVEL SUPPORTS IN THAT IT OFFERS A LOST LOVE, A WINTER WITH SHUTTING PASSAGE UNDERLYING HER OF HER WORK IS THE THINK OF LOVE AGAINST A LATE. SOME TRANSLATE IN PASTORAL-GUIDED FEMALE AND LOVE, WHEN IT FORMS, CAN BE AN ANCHOR, COMING TO THAT BECOMES A SERVICE OF FANTASY FOR AS OF THE TITLE STORY OF OUR COLLECTION DANCING. CARPENTER, IN THE NOVEL, IS DRIVEN BY THE FACT THAT SHE HAS A FANTASY, THINKING TO BE BETTER WITH THE SOFT LITTLE THAT BEHOLDING HER A CONSIDERABLE BLISS. FURTHER AS A "WINTER WINTER," WILLIAMS SHOWS US HER FIRST PEOPLE COME TO TERMS WITH THEIR LOVE, A LATE LOVE, BUT NOT A LATE LOVE. THE NOVEL IS A LATE LOVE, A LATE LOVE, A LATE LOVE.



his head and scowling, throwing an obligatory lookle from behind a closed door.

Joan tries a door to the barn but it is latched from the inside. She walks around the barn to her back porch. The hens of her flock cluck. She wears chains on her gold hands.

Two weeks beside her, his own hands in his pockets. A flock of scowling fly overhead in an oddly tight formation. A hawk flies above them. This hawk will not fall upon them, circled like this. It was would separate from the flock, then the hawk could fall.

"I don't know about this mother in a sort of kindness place," Tom says. "It's not what I had in mind."

Annie laughs but she's not paying attention. She wants to know how the book is. She tags at another door. Doors and chains of rust mount the palms of her gloves. Then suddenly, the woman leaves her face.

"Martha would like this school, wouldn't she," she says.

"We don't know, Annie," Tom says. "Please don't, Annie."

"I thought I've lived my whole life in one corner of a room," Annie says. "That's the problem. It's not having always been in this one corner. And now I can't see anything. I don't even know the rooms. do you see what I'm saying?"

Tom nods but he doesn't see the room. The woman is him has become his blood, his life flowing in him. There's no room for him.

In the farmhouse building, Molly sits in a wooden chair facing her interviewer, Miss Pium. Miss Pium teaches composition and cross-country skiing.

"We asked if I believe in aliveness?" Molly asks.

"Yes, dear. Uh-huh. I did," Miss Pium says.

"Well, I suppose I'd have to believe in it," Molly says.

Annie has a large cardboard box that holds compartmentalized information on the school's type or setting. The rules and regulations for one school are put together in what is meant to look like an American program. In the car's backseat, Molly flips through the books.

"You can't do anything in this place?" she says. "The things on your walls have to be framed and you can only cover sixty percent of the wall space. You can't wear jeans." Molly gasps. "And you have to eat breakfast?" Molly asks. She looks back into the door, on top of the car's script.

She glances quickly at the window at an orchard. She is sick of the orchard. She is sick of discussing her "interests." White fields curve by. Her lips are not close somewhere. Moving from her white car to the back seat of the striped car. Her life is never going to be hers. She thinks of it raining, back home in the canyon, the rain falling upon the river. Her legs itch and her soles itch. She has never been so bored. She

thinks that the worst thing she has done so far in her life is to be in a car both on night, walking a quarter and saying I hate God. That was the worst thing. It's pathetic. She has a hatless into a car. She is not to wear a hat enough now," she says to her parents. "I mean, it's the other side of the double-contour. Maybe I don't even want to do this," she says.

She looks at the thick sky hiding back near the door. She doesn't like God anymore. She doesn't even think about God. Anybody who would let a bad choice on a piece of bread.

She, her school, has chapel four times a week, and so her teacher, her guide. The school is handsome and rather horrible. The roles of her mother have a bright, horrible orange. She looks at Molly.

"We don't decorate the trees in the chapel," she says.

Molly looks at the tree trunks behind the wooden boxes. Bands of sap peel golden on the bark.

"That is a very old chapel," Shirley says. "See those pillars? They look like marble, but they're just pine, painted to look like marble." She can't bring herself, she's just seeing what she knows. They walk on of the chapel. Shirley suddenly, on her horrible orange shoes.

"Do you play hockey?" she asks.

"Molly says.

"Why not?"

"I like my teeth," Molly says.

"You do," Shirley says in mock amazement. "Just looking," she says. "The going to show you the hockey rink anyway. It's new. It's a big rink."

Molly says. Tom and Annie watching some distance away beneath a large tree draped with many strings of unstrung lights. Her mother's book is in her, but Tom and her mother.

Molly follows Shirley into the cold, cold air of the hockey rink. She is on the ice. The air is cold, stinging, used up. On one wall is a big painting of a boy in a hockey uniform. He is in a graceful crouching position, skating stone on blades, skating toward the viewer, making his way to the center. He has brown hair and wide gold eyes. Molly reads the plaque beneath the painting. His name is Jerry Watkins and he had died six years before at the age of seventeen. His parents had built the rink and dedicated it to him.

Molly takes a deep breath. "My sister, Martha, knew him," she says.

"On your?" Shirley says with interest. "Did your sister go here?"

"Yes," Molly says. She frowns a little as

she sees, Martha and Jerry Watkins of course know each other. They know everything but they have secrets too.

The car is not his real car in there. Neither does the car look like that. She looks at Jerry Watkins, brother of her sister, skating toward them on his black skates. It is not a very good skating. Molly thinks that these who love Jerry Watkins must be disappointed in it.

"They were very good friends," Molly says.

"How come you didn't tell me before your sister went here?"

Molly shrugs. She looks happy, happier than she has in a long time. She has brought Martha back from the dead and set her to school. She has given her a new, friends, things she must do. It can go on and on. She has given her a kind of a place in death. She has freed her.

"Did she date him or what?" Shirley asks.

"I wasn't like that," Molly says. "It was better than that."

She doesn't want to go much further, not with this girl where she dislikes, but she has a little further.

Shirley knows Jerry better than anybody. "Molly says.

She thinks of Martha and Jerry Watkins being together, talking each other's secrets. They will like each other. They are seven and fourteen, living in the single moment that they have been gone.

Molly is with her parents in the car again on a winding road, going through the mountains. Tonight they will stay in a inn that Annie has read about and tomorrow they will visit the last school. Several large rocks, crusted with dirty ice, have slid upon the road. They are crusted with red cones and traffic moves slowly around them. The last low snow body strikes the windshield.

"Bear could handle those rocks," Molly says.

"Bear would go right over them,"

"Oh, that truck," Annie says.

"That truck is an ecological criminal,"

Tom says.

"Big Red Bear," Molly says.

Annie shakes her head and sighs. Bear is innocent. Bear is only a machine, gleaming in a dark garage.

Molly can't see her parents' faces. She can't remember the way they looked when she was a baby. She can't remember what she and Martha left against above. She wants to ask them about Martha. She wants to ask them if they are seeking her so to know in that they can imagine Martha is just far away too. But she knows she will never ask such questions. There are secrets now. The dead have their secrets and the living have their secrets too the dead. Then is the way it must be.

Molly has with things. And she sets them up each night in the room she's in. She says

a little secret upon the barefoot, and then her things upon it. Painted seeds for her hair, a little dish for her rings. They are the only guests at the inn. It is an old building, structure on the ice. It is a few days, the women will be changed it down for the winter. It is too cold for such old pieces in the winter, the owner says. He had planned to keep it open for skaters on the lake when he first bought it and had even considered part of the cellar as a skate room. There is a bar down there, a wooden floor, and shelves of old skates in all sizes. Windie glass runs the length of one wall just above ground level and there are spotlights that illuminate a portion of the bar. But water isn't the secret here. The bars are too old and there are not enough guests.

"In the deepest lake in the state?" Annie asks. "I read that somewhere, didn't I?" She has her guidebooks, which she examines each night. Everywhere she goes, she buys books.

"No," the man's owner says. "It's not the deepest, but it's deep. You should take a look at that one. It's beautiful."

He is a young man, looking hopefully proud of his ice. He begins with them, saying guests there back toward and some bars of soap, the others there version for supper, fresh bread and pie. He serves them his smooth, frozen lake.

"Do you want to skate?" Tom asks his wife and daughter. Molly shakes her head.

"No," Annie says. "She takes a bottle of Scotch from her suitcase. 'Are there any glasses?' she asks the man.

"I'm sorry," the man says, startled. He seems to think. "They're all down in the skate room, in the bar. It gives a slight nod and walks away."

Tom goes down into the cellar for the glasses. The skates, their runners bright, are jumbled upon the shelves. The frozen lake glimmers in the window. He pushes a peak the door and steps out onto the ice. Annie, in her room, waits without taking off her coat, without looking at the bottle. Tom takes a few quick steps and then slides. He is wearing a suit and tie, his good slippers. It is a windy night and the good slippers with his feet and he'd like to sign cracks on his chains. Tom skates across the ice, his hands pushed out, then he holds his hands behind his back, going back and forth in the space where the light is on. There is a boy without the skates, he knows, and probably on goat without them either, but it is enough to be here under the black sky, cold and light and morning. He wants to be out here with Annie.

From a window, Molly sees her father on the ice. After a moment, she sees her mother moving toward him, not skating, but shuffling forward, making her way. She sees their heavy shadowed shapes embrace.

Molly sees them, already remembering it. ■

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this shoulder beneath the fabric of his sweater.

"This young man," he announced in a voice loud enough to leave no doubt of his intention to address the party as a whole, and most often fathers at the room full silent. "This young man may look like a student, and that's what he was at one time, but not anymore. He's an infantry soldier on his way to Vietnam, where I imagine his personal problems will soon be a great deal worse than any of our own. So suppose we all forget about college for a minute, please, and let's have a hand for Terry Ryan."

There was some clapping, though no where near as much as he'd hoped for, and even before he was over Terry said, "None of you had better do this, Mike."

"Why?"

"I don't know, just because."

Then from across the room Michael saw Sarah looking at him at disappointment or disgust.

"Well, Jesus, Terry, I didn't mean to embarrass you," he said. "I thought they ought to know who you are, that's all."

"Oh, I know it's okay, forget it. But it was a thing that wouldn't be forgotten."

Grace Howard was on her feet and making her way through the smoke, heading down on Terry Ryan with one soft index finger aimed at his chest.

"May I ask you something?" she inquired. "Why do you want to kill people?" And he smiled humbly. "Oh, come on, lady."

"I never killed anybody in my life."

"Well, but you'll have your chance now, won't you? With your automatic rifle and your hand grenades?"

"Hold it, Grace," Michael said. "You're way out of line here. This boy was drafted."

"And maybe they'll give you a little extra, too," she went on, "so you can eat in the military and the beaches and the capitals on women and children. Well, listen—"

"Oh, stop this," Sarah called, hurrying to Terry's side as if to protect him.

"—Listen," Grace Howard said.

"You're not looking anybody in the mirror. I know why you want to kill people. You want to kill people because you're so afraid."

Some of Grace's friends managed to take charge of her then; they turned her around and walked her back across the room and out the front door, which closed with a little slam.

"Terry, I'm sorry as hell about that," Michael told him. "I know she was drunk, but I didn't know that she was crazy."

"Look, the hell with it, okay?" he said.

"Fuck it. The more we talk about it, the worse it's going to get."

"Exactly," Sarah said quietly.

Later, when everyone else had gone at last, Sarah made up the bed in the spare room so that Terry could spend the night

there. But these wasn't much talk of the night; they had to get up early to drive Terry to his friends' place. There he changed into his Army uniform, which Sarah said was "very becoming," and walked up his dad's boat, and they drove him twenty miles to the airport. There was some mild and pleasant talk in the car—all three of them had reached the stage of easy good humor that sometimes follows a night of too life sleep—but none of them mentioned Grace Howard.

When it was time to say goodbye at the gate to Terry's flight, Michael shook hands with him in a little excess of old soldier's heartiness. "Well, stay loose, Terry. And keep a tight schedule."

Then Sarah opened her arms for him. She was taller than he was, but that didn't make it an awkward embrace. She held him, however briefly, in the way a man ought to be held before going to a war that nobody would ever understand.

There must be pleasure for much of the drive home, until Michael said, "Well, hell, the whole damn thing was my fault. I know that I never should've made that dumb little speech. The hell with it. But the point is, baby, when I was at the Army you warned people to pay attention the night before you went overseas. It was nice to have someone make a fuss over you—and they did, if you were lucky."

"Well, I know," Sarah said, "but that was another time. That was before I was born. Believe Terry was born, too."

And when he glanced away from the road again he found she was quietly crying.

She went to sleep in room as they were both at the house, but she gave him a chance to drink two cold beers in the kitchen and try to get his brains together.

Then the phone rang. "Michael? John Howard here. Listen. Who was that kid you had in your house last night?"

"Frank of mine from New York, is it, he was just passing through. Why?"

"Well, I understood he was very rude and obnoxious to Grace after I left."

"Oh?" And Michael instantly knew there would be no point trying to clear up his own earlier behavior. Terry Ryan was a thousand miles away at the day now, rid of Billings, Kansas, Kansas; nobody's house words could defend him any longer. "Well, I'm sorry there was any unpleasantness, John," he said with what he hoped was an edge of irony, and he hung up the receiver before Howard could say anything more.

If Howard called back at once to persist in his false grievance there would be nothing to do but tell him the truth about what Grace had done, but not. And the phone didn't ring a second time.

Sarah was still asleep, which was probably all to the good; that way, there might be no need to talk it over, ever again. Still, he washed the sweat away, as she could assure him he'd done the right thing. **O**

Bess

V

by Jayne Anne Phillips

TO HAVE TO imagine, this was sixty, seventy, eighty years ago, more than the lifetime allotted most persons. We could see no other farms than our house, not a habitation or the smoke of someone's chimney; we could not see the borders of the road anymore but only the roof of snow, the white fields, and mountains beyond. Winter imploded day, but it was summers I should have feared. Summers, when the house was large and full, the work out-of-doors as it seemed so work at all, everything done in company—summers all the men were home, the farm was crowded, lively, it seemed nothing could go wrong then.

Our parents gazed about their two children, first the six sons, one after the other, then a few years later the four daughters, Warwick, and me. Another daughter after the boy was a bad sign, Pa said; there were enough children. I was the last, youngest of twelve Hansons, and just thirteen months younger than Warwick. Since we were born on each other's heels, Mom said, we would have to raise each other.

The six older brothers had all left home at sixteen to homestead somewhere on the land, each gang first to live with the brother established before him. They worked mines or not timber for



JAYNE ANNE PHILLIPS GREW UP IN WEST VIRGINIA, HER FAMILY ARRIVING IN THE EARLY 1910s. WITH FIVE BROTHERS AND ONE SISTER, PHILLIPS LEFT HOME TO ATTEND WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY IN 1934 AND ENTERED THE ARMY WRITERS PROGRAM AND THE NEXT YEAR WED STORY CORRECTION HOUSES FOR A YEAR. SHE SERVED AS A RADIO VOICE IN AMERICAN READING, SHE LIVED NOW IN MASSACHUSETTS, HAVING JUST PUBLISHED AN ACCCLAIMED FIRST NOVEL, AN ANCIENT DRAGON FROM WHICH "BESS" WAS SELECTED FOR READINGS AT THE RITVE STRATEGIC THE NOVEL IS A DARING MEMOIR THAT EXPLORES ASPECTS OF YOUTH AND LOVE—NOT ROMANTIC LOVE, BUT THE GREAT PASSIONATE BOND OF FELLOWSHIP AND SUBORDINATION. PHILLIPS'S EARLY SHORT WORK TENDED TOWARD THE GUTTERLINE OF THE MANNER OF FLANNERY O'CONNOR OF MIDWESTERN AMERICA, BUT NOW SHE HAS WRITTEN IN A PASTORAL, LYRIC TONE, GETTING HER STORY TALKING TO US THROUGH THE THICKENED SPINNING OF HER ABSTRACT, DELICATE CHARACTERS. PHILLIPS NOBLY TOLD US AND DESCRIBED THE PROCESS AS "BESS LIES BY A WHISPER."

ILLUSTRATION BY ALICE MONTAGNE. PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARBARA STERN



money to start fires and had an eye for women who smooch delicate. Once each signing they were all back to plant gardens with Pa, and the sisters talked amongst themselves about each one.

By late June the brothers had brought their families, except the youngest children. All the women in the big house were used, the parlorians as well, swept and cleaned. There was always enough space because each family had at least two rooms, one given to parents and young baby, and the other left for older children to sleep together, all ladies unwashed across a wide cob-stuffed mattress. Within those houses were many children, fifteen, twenty, more. I am speaking now of the summer I was twelve, the summer Warwick got sick and everything changed.

It was nearly there then. We slept in the big house in our same rooms, which was bay-windowed, very large and dirty along the porch, the huge oak tree tilting almost as much as it was possible to tilt out to right and left behind the branches. Adults on the porch were different from high up, the porch is in the dark and clean cooking as the men leaned and smoked, murmuring, drinking home-made beer kept cool in cedar crocks.

LATE ONE NIGHT that summer, Warwick woke me, punched my arm inside my cotton shirt and held his hand across my mouth. He snuffed like a shadow in his white nightgown, motioning I should sit low to the window. Warwick was quickly through and I was wiser, my weight still on the sill as he settled himself, then lifted me over when I grabbed a higher branch, my feet on his chest and shoulders. We climbed over the branches that grew next the third floor of the house and sat cradled where three branches sloped. Warwick whispered not to move, my behind the leaves as they took look. We sat outside Claude's window, seeing into the den then.

Claude was youngest of the older brothers and his wife was hairy with child, standing like a white column in the middle of the floor, hair white-chestnut hanging like a beard her like a beard, her hands were long and balled; she stood, both hands pressed to the small of her back, leaning as though to help the weight at her front. Then I saw Claude whisper, darker then because he wasn't wearing clothes. He touched her feet and I thought it was he was helping her take off her shoes, as I helped the young children in the evenings. But he had nothing in his hands and was lifting the den chemise above her knees, higher to her thighs, then above her hips as she was crouching and sat up and crawled toward him, only holding the cloth bunched to conceal her body. She pressed his head away from her, the chemise pulled to her waist in back and his one hand there trying to hold her. Then he backed her

three steps to the foot of the bed and she bled blood, her pants bled, he bled down again, his face almost at her feet and his mouth moving like he was biting her along her legs. She held him just away with her hands and he touched over and over the big bloody hole, stroking it long and slowly like you would stroke a scared animal. She didn't stop quickly and turned her so her belly was against the heaped sheets. She grasped the bed frame with both hands to where he pulled her lap down so she bent prone forward from the waist, her two hands were occupied not to uncover all of her, pushing the chemise to her shoulders and kept her breast from the filthy cloth but her head and face, falling over all her shoulders so a long hollow down her chest was all naked gleam and curves, headless and wide-legged with the moles belly bag and pale beneath her like a mouse, staring that way she looked at dumb and stupid like our white mouse before she died. All this time she was whispering, Claude looking at her. We saw her, he started to grin but didn't smile her very slow, tilting his head and listening. I put my cool hands over my eyes then, leaving her sounds until Warwick pulled my arm down and made me look. Claude was right behind me, pushing me and flinching like he couldn't get out of her, she howled once. He let her go, stumbling; they staggered onto the bed, she lying on her back away from him with the bent chemise in her mouth. He pulled her to her feet and took the cloth from her legs and wiped her face.

That was perhaps twenty minutes of a night in July 1893. I looked at Warwick as though for the first time. When he talked he was so close I could feel the words in my skin distance from night before. "Are you glad you saw," he whispered, his face brightened.

He had been watching them from the tree for several weeks.

IN OLD PHOTOGRAPHS of Gordon that July 4, the two look scruffy and blurred. The blue of the sky is not shown in those black-and-white studies. Warwick's interests on the two men's shirts were broad and raised; that day people sat along them as on low benches, their feet at the rear, waiting for the parade. We were all used to say still as a photographer took pictures of the white suits from a nearby hillside. There was a person blessing the new country and the contract land assembled. The parade was forming out of sight, by the river, Warwick and Pa had already driven out in the wagon to watch. It would be a big parade; we had heard that local men had laid out part of a canal and were traveling Belknap. I ran up the hill to see if I could get a glimpse of them. Men were telling me to come back and my about was blood to the ankles with dust. Below me the crowd began to cheer. The

ribbioned horses dashed with fright and kicked, jerking their heads over low branches of trees and shivering the leaves. From up the hill I saw dust raised as the wheels and heard the crashing of what was crushed. There were low elephants, they came out from the trees along the road and the longer set to the massive, barreled head of the first. He sat in a sort of purple chair, swaying side to side with the lurching rumble of the beast. The trainer wore a red cap and jacket, he was dark and smooth on his face and held a long close hair twist. The boy was moving his arms at one and it was Warwick, I was running closer and the trainer bent with his arm on the shoulders of the elephant while the animal's sticky trunk, all alive, tipped small bushes. Warwick wanted, I could see him and sat dodging the men until I was alone. The earth was pounding and the animal was big like a breathing wall, its rough side crusted with dirt and straw. The dust began to rise, I stepped over the low side and cringed with many crouches. The monstrous creature worried, whirling, and the motion of the lurching walk was like the rising of a colossal gas. For, he lay, I saw Warwick's face, I was poking, prying for that to stop, stop and take me, but they kept on going. Just as the elephants passed, work left the dust and ribbons and hats, the white of the summer shirts swung and followed. The cheering was a great noise under the trees and birds flew up wild. Gordon was a sea of yellow dust, the flags snapping in the wind and banners strung between the handrails broken, flying.

Warwick got on his head to walk a wire. Our Pa would not let him do such things so Warwick took out secretly to the creek every morning and practiced on the fly. He constructed a thickness of logs barked lengthwise as the ground, propped with nailed supports so he could walk along an edge. First three boards, then two, then one. He walked bamboo, testing his long toes and cradled a bamboo fishing pole in his arms for balance. I followed once so closely when I saw him light out for the woods. Standing back a hundred feet from the creek bed, I saw through dense summer leaves my brother tread magnificently just above the groundline, thick ivy concealed the edges of the boards and made him appear a pretty magician. He often walked naked until the best was fenced and his innocent two large hand-on-downs that obstructed careful movement. He walked parallel to the creek and slipped often. Periodically he grew frustrated and jumped cursing into the muddy water. Cries of caution at that point were muted and the water perhaps five feet deep, he floated belly-up like a seal and then crawled up the bank mud-slicked to start again. I stood in the leaves. He was tall and still colish then, dark skin the sun so moist of

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BY E. L. DOCTOROW

My aunts had decided on their course of action without consulting us. It meant neither my mother nor my brother nor I could visit Grandma, because we were supposed to have moved west too, a family. After all, My brother Harold and I didn't mind—it was always a nightmare at the old people's home.

A few weeks after the end of our ritual mourning, my Aunt Doris phoned us from her home in Larchmont. Aunt Doris was the wealthiest of my father's sisters. Her husband was a lawyer, and both her sons were at Amherst. She had called to say that Grandma was asking why she didn't hear from Dave. I had answered the phone, "You're the writer in the

[illegible]

"family," my aunt said. "Your father had to reach birth in you. Would you mind making up something? Scraft to me and I'll send it to her. She won't know the difference."

That evening, at the kitchen table, I purchased my homework and told composed a letter. I tried to assume my father's response to his new life. He had never been well. He had never traveled anywhere. In his generation the great journey was from the working class to the professional class, and he had never made that, either. But he loved New York, where he had been born and lived his life, and he was always discovering new things about it. He especially loved the old parts of the city below Canal Street, where he would find old tenements or firms that were founded in apocryphal and fear. He was a unionist for an appliance jobber with accounts all over the city. He liked to bring home rare cheeses or exotic foreign vegetables that were sold only at certain neighborhood stores. Once he brought home a box of asparagus, another time an antique ship's telescope in a wooden case with a brass cap.

"Dear Maria," I wrote. "America is beautiful. The sun shines every day and the air is warm and I feel better than I have in years. The climate is so warm in your world we expect but filled with wild flowers and citrus plants and peculiar cracked trees that look like men holding their arms out. You can see great distances in whatever direction you turn and so the sun is a source of amazement maybe fifty miles from here, but in the morning with the sun on your face you can see the snow as their crown."

My aunt called some deputies and told them to take the letter to her. She was the old lady that the full effect of Dave's death came over her. She had to excuse herself and went out to the parking lot. "Tonight," she said, "I feel such terrible longing for him, really so right, he loved to go places, he loved life, he loved everything."

We began trying to organize our loss. My father had borrowed money from his insurance and there was very little left. Some compensation was left due from his firm but it didn't look as if they would honor them. There were a couple of thousand dollars in a savings bank that had to be cashed out there until the estate was settled. The lawyer advised us that Dave's husband and he were very proper. "The estate," my mother murmured, quivering as if it pained her face. "The estate?" She applied for a job part time in the admissions office of the hospital where my father's terminal illness had taken diagnosed, and while he was spent several months until they had sent him home to die. She knew all of the doctors and staff and she had learned "from better experience," as she told them, about the hospital routine. She was hired.

I hated that hospital, it was dark and

grim and full of worried people. I thought it was characteristic of my mother to seek out a job that had not lost her so

We lived in an apartment on the corner of 175th Street and the Grand Concourse, one light up. Three rooms. I shared the bedroom with my brother. It was furnished with furniture because when my father had requested a hospital bed in the last weeks of his illness we had moved some of the living room pieces into the bedroom and made over the living room for him. We had a wicker bookcase, bench, a pinning table, bureau, a record player and radio console, stacks of 78 albums, my brother's toasters and toaster, and so on. My father's command to die in the coverable sofa in the living room that had been their bed before his illness. The two rooms were connected by a narrow hall made even narrower by bookcases along the wall. Off the hall was a small kitchen and dining and a bathroom. There were lots of closets in the kitchen—bowl, toaster, pressure cooker, counter-top dishwasher, blender—that my father had gotten through his job at last. A battered phone in the room. "In case," that most of these features were unused because my mother did not care for them. Christmas dinner with flowers or garlands that required the reading of elaborate instructions were not for her. They were in part responsible for the social cluster of our lives and now she wanted to get rid of them. "We're home based," she said. "Who needs them?"

So we agreed to throw out or sell anything unnecessary. While I had hours for the appliances and my brother had the books with books, my mother opened my father's closet and took out his clothes. He had several suits because as a salesman he needed to look his best. My mother wanted to see why she was so to see which of the suits he loved and used. My brother refused to go to them as I used to see jacket, which was too large for me. The living room the shelves filled my area and the vacant space of my father's being came to me.

"This is very too big," I said. "Don't worry," my mother said. "I had it cleaned. Would I let you wear it if I had it?"

It was the evening, the end of winter, and the snow was coming down on the window and melting as it settled. The ceiling bulb glowed on a pile of my father's suits and trousers on hangers they across the bed in the shape of a dead man. We refused to try on anything new and my mother began to cry.

"What are you crying for?" my brother shouted. "You wanted to get rid of things, didn't you?"

A few weeks later my aunt phoned again and she said that it was necessary to have another letter from Dave. Grand-

ma had fallen out of her chair and bruised herself and was very depressed.

"How long does this go on?" my mother said.

"It's not so terrible," my aunt said, "for the little time left to make things easier for her."

My mother stomped down the phone. "He can't even die when he wants to!" she cried. "Even death comes second so Maria! What are they afraid of, the shock will kill her! Nothing can kill her. She's indestructible! A nurse through the heart couldn't kill her!"

When I sat down in the kitchen to write the letter I found it more delicate than the first one. "Don't write me," I said to my brother. "It's his last message."

"Don't. Don't have to do something just because someone wants you to," Harold said. He was two years older than me and had married at City College, but when my father became ill he had switched to night school and gotten a job as a record man.

"Dear Maria," I wrote. "I hope you're feeling well. We do it all as a fiddle. The life here is good and the people are very friendly and tolerant. Nobody wears suits and ties here. Just a pair of slacks and a short-sleeved shirt. Perhaps a sweater in the morning. I have bought into a very successful radio and record business and I'm doing very well. You remember DAVE'S ELECTRONIC, my old place on Forty-third Street? Well now it's DAVE'S ARKADIA ELECTRONIC and we have a line of television sets as well."

I knew that letter off to my Aunt Doris, and as we all knew she would, she phoned soon after. My brother held his hand over the mouthpiece. "Is Doris well? her latest review," he said.

"Jonathan? You're a very talented young man. I just wanted to tell you what a blessing your letter was. Her whole life it is up when I read the just about Doris's story. That would be an excellent way to continue."

"Well I hope I don't have to do this anymore, Aunt Doris. It's not very honest."

"Her love, darling," my mother thought. "Let me talk to her."

"She's not here," I said. "Tell her not to worry," my aunt said. "A poor old lady who has never wished anything but the best for her will soon die."

I did not repeat this to my mother, for whom it would have been one more in the family anthology of unfortunate remarks. But the I had to suffer it myself for the possible truth it might contain. Each side declared its position with rhetoric, but I who was neutral, considered the words and details each indicated on the other, taking no stands. But my father himself. Years ago his life had composed a picture of business failures and missed opportunities that was close to overpowering. The great misfortune he had met in his early life, and my mother. Each on the other,

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had to do with whose fault this was—who was responsible for the fact that he had not lived up to anyone's expectations?

As to the two prophesies, when spring came my mother's prevailed. Grandma was still alive.

One brother Stanley my mother and brother and I took the bus to the North Jersey area. It was situated on a slight rise. We stood looking over rolling fields and mountains. There was that sense of peace that I had never known. The air was so clear, the mountains were so close. Without a heartbeat my father did not seem to be home. He didn't seem to be properly buried.

My mother gazed at the plot beside his mother's but called it "They were always too close for other people," she said. "Even as the old days on Stanton Street." They put an ivy. Nobody was ever good enough for them. Nobody Dave himself was not good enough for them. Except to get them things, things which they had not been good enough for them."

"Mum, please," my brother said.

"I'll tell you. Before I ever met him he was just a man's man's man. And Mum's spirit strings were like chains, let me tell you. We had to live where we could be near them for the Sunday visits. Every Sunday, that was my life, a visit to Mum's. Whatever she knew I wanted, a better apartment, a stack of furniture, a summer camp for the boys, she spoke against it. I know your father's spirit decision had to be considered and reconsidered. And nothing changed. Nothing ever changed."

He began to cry. We sat her down on a nearby bench. My brother walked off to avoid the sinner's eye. I looked at my mother who was crying and I went off after my brother.

"Mum's still crying," I said. "Shouldn't we do something?"

"It's all right," he said. "It's what she can bear."

"Yes," I said, and then a job escaped from my throat. "But I don't like crying too." My brother Harold put his arm around me. "Look at this old black nose here," he said. "The way it's curved. You can see the changing features in moments—just like everything else."

Sometimes in times that I began dreaming of my father. Not the robust father of my childhood, the handsome man with healthy pink skin and healthy eyes, and a nose that was the shining blue period in the middle. My dad father. We were taking him home from the hospital. It was understood that he had come back from

death. This was amazing and joyful. On the other hand he was terribly apologetically damaged, or, more accurately, spoiled and unloved. He was very yellowed and debilitated by his death, and there were no patients that he would not see again. He was not aware of this and his entire personality was changed. He was angry and impatient with all of us. We were trying to help him in some way, struggling to get him home, but something prevented us. Something we had to fix, a terrible mistake that had sprung upon some mechanical thing he had a car but it wouldn't start or the car was made of wood, or his clothes, which had become too large for him, had caught in the door. In one version he had been brought with us and I had to lift him from his wheelchair and sit him in the laundry. He began to snarl and catch in the spokes of the wheelchair. This seemed to be some unreasonable loss on his part. My brother looked on sadly and tried to get him cooperation.

That was the dream. I shared it with one. Once when I woke, crying out, my brother turned on the light. He seemed to know what I'd been dreaming but I persisted. I don't remember. The dream made me feel guilty. I felt guilty as the dream too. I was not, my brother told me, I don't want to live with him. The dream meant I was not taking him home, or trying to, but it was nevertheless understood by all of us that he was to live. He was to be brought back from death, but what we were doing was taking him to some place where he would live by himself without help from anyone until he died again.

At one point I became so fearful of this dream that I tried not to go to sleep. I tried to think of things about my father and to remember him before his illness. He used to call me money. "Hello, money," he would say when he came home from work. He always wanted to go to someplace—in the state, to the park, to a ball game. He loved to talk. When I went walking with him he would say, "Hold your shoulders back, don't slouch. Hold your head up and look at the world. What do you want?" As he slumped and the shadow his shoulders moved from side to side, as if he was having some kind of seizure. He moved with a bounce. He was always eager to see what was around the corner.

This first harvest for a better combined with a special occasion in our house. My brother Harold had met a girl he liked and had gone out with her several times. Now she was coming to our house for dinner.

We had prepared for that for days, cleaning everything in sight, even the house in a good way. Grandma is almost completely blind, she has glasses and good shoes. My mother came home every two weeks to get the dinner going. We opened the picnic table in the dining room and brought in the

broken chairs. My mother opened the table with a handkerchief and put out her silver. It was the first family occasion since my father's illness.

I heard my brother's girlfriend's hat. She was a thin girl with very straight hair and she had a terrific smile. Her presence seemed to excite the air. It was amazing to see a living breathing girl in our house. She looked around and what she said was, "Oh, I've never seen so many books!" While she and my brother sat at the table my mother was in the kitchen putting the food into serving bowls and I was going from the kitchen to the living room, holding around like a waiter, with a white cloth over my arm and a high style of service. The person of the dinner began on the table with flourish. In the kitchen my mother's eyes were sparkling. She looked at me and nodded and smiled the words "She's adorable!"

My brother walked himself to be seated on the left side of what we might say, the left place of the girl—but my name was Betty—to see if we met with her approval. She worked in an insurance office and was taking classes in accounting at City College. Harold was under a terrible strain but he was cheerful and happy too. He had bought a bottle of Chateau d'Yquem wine to go with the most chicken. He held up his glass and proposed a toast. My mother said, "To good health and happiness," and we all drank. Even I. At that moment the phone rang and I went into the bedroom to get it.

"Someone? This is your Aunt Doris. How is everyone?"

"Fine, thank you."

"I want to ask one last thing of you. I need a letter from Doris. Your brother's very ill. Do you think you can?"

"Who is it?" my mother called from the living room.

"Doris, Aunt Doris," I said quickly. "I have to go now, we're in a hurry. And I hang up the phone."

"To my friend Doris," I said, sitting back down. "The doctor's new the next pages to review."

The dinner was very fine. Harold and Stanley and my brother's shoulders moved from side to side, as if they were doing the same thing. My mother and I had talked up the going table and put it back against the wall and I had swept the carpet up with the carpet sweeper. We all sat and talked and listened to records for a while and then my brother took Susan home. The evening had gone very well.

Once when my mother would not have my brother had pointed out something. The letters from Doris were not really necessary. "What is this?" he said, holding the paper up. "Grandma is almost completely blind, she has glasses and good shoes. The situation really call for a therapy position? Does it need verminicide? Would the old lady know the difference if

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SUMMER READING

by William H. Gass

[illegible][illegible]

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SUMMER READING

Not for Love

by Robert Stone

on Anne Bonhomme, whom the greater world called Lee Vergas, an Italian in Mexico, and in a lounge chair for the same smoking and listening to the overflow of sunset. Her children were playing on the lawn under the shade of the orange trees; she had watched the darkness deepen to silhouettes in the twilight. The soft honey glow of the children's bodies had faded in the dark shade, now their coverings and her husband's thin-lined profiles against the radiant form and exuberant life suggested support to her. It was an ugly thought and she forced it aside. She stood up, took her sunglasses off, and went inside.

It had grown dark in the same bungalow. The only light came from being pasted sky framed in the doorway. She sat on a high-backed wicker chair looking out. In the darkness behind her she could feel its presence gathering. A confusion of sounds rang in her ears. Watchful, perfectly still, she stayed where she was until she saw a figure in the doorway. At first she thought it had to do with the things that were accumulating in the corner behind her back, she watched intently, vertically unaided.

Secretary

She knew who it was, then.

"24 at," she said and she reached out for the light that was over the phone. "Hello, Helene. Good evening."

Helga Michalski was the children's nanny, supplied by the production unit through the hotel. A stout, pale, heavy-browed young woman, she watched Lee Warner with caution and a formal smile.

[illegible]

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letters had risen, the clock ticks from anger into resignation, from abusive persistence to indifference. "De Kunder told me the same thing. To not say it out loud."

He was going to walk. The secret coach that praised for timeliness, the smiling coach—that was what they meant, his weakness was timeliness. For five years of patient martyrdom and at last he was saving himself, looking after number one. And why not, she thought? It was before of course, his and hers.

A small electric lamp, styled like a guitar, gave off a soft light beside their vanity table. The night sky was clear with stars. He never turned toward her as she watched her across the shadows.

"I want you to stay in close touch with Kurlander," Lionel told his wife. "I'm going to telephone him and he'll be checking in with you every day. If you're in trouble call him. Your only effort to stop the seductive shagster, you'll crack up. But if you take one tiny every morning and one day it might be long things like you are at the moment. Remember you may experience a bad attack as alarm."

"So," she said, "if I start feeling too good I'm in trouble."

"I was in feel good time. But don't panic and go back to your work. He turned to the cross-colored wall and strack it. "No house, no grass, no tree—sorry. When shooting ends go back to your regular dose. In the future," he said, reaching toward her, "who knows? They may come up with something that works as well with lower rate effects. You may stop being crazy. One of us may die."

"There would still be the other," she said. "There would still be the kids."

"The boys might kill."

"Oh what are you, she said. "Trust me and I'll give you something beautiful."

Lionel smiled. "A movie."

"Don't pay like money, let" she asked him softly. "I tell you, babe—even if they have to take me off this set in a blanket I'm going to work."

He stayed braced against the wall, immobile. She stared at him, knowing he would not turn, that he was afraid of her madman. Sweat Lionel, she told him nervously. I've given him the ground, now clear, behind your bed: behind. Only let one long my children.

"You mustn't cry," he said when he faced her at last.

She wiped her face with the back of her hand.

"Why do you stay with me?" she asked him after a while.

"Because," Lionel said, "you are life. And I will not give up on life. It's as simple as that."

For a moment she thought she must be wrong: that he would not go. Then he turned her, lightly once and then hard on the hip and then released her. After that

she knew he was lost to her. That's the way you give up life, she thought. But you go right on living.

"And you," she asked him, "you'll be all right?"

"Oh yes," he said. She smiled, knowing it was no less than the truth. He would suffer and then he would be all right. And it was your own, now clear, she told him. It was his own children. One of the things gathered itself up in the darkness at the window and of the shadows.

Five little years had little Peggy. The spoiled golden Lancelotti, her perfect now at risk. A girl who looked like her and whom she hardly knew, who lived in Bloom Ridge with her ex-husband Roberto because Maria was crazy in California. Charles, the dead one, in custody of the Long Friends. Lancelotti, the youngest of Roberto's who stayed with the Sisters of Mary in Port Douglas and who only very rarely by word, gesture, or started look admitted the world to community. Old last. Bourgeois. Bourgeois were plenty of cozy Bourgeois. Cozy Bourgeois in Assumption Parish. Cozy Bourgeois from Labrador to Guyana. From Morgan City to Hollywood.

She did her hand down the inside of Lancelotti's shirt, tracing the warm silk, and held him hard, the hand of the man who was getting his courage up to leave her. They stood together for a while and Lionel said with a theatrical flourish, "Ah! We may live in hope of our infinitely life dream, eh? If we don't lack stars so forth first."

She was able to summon a polite smile. Lionel smiled the perfect one. "Think. I'll have a wife," he said. "Lancelotti said it's up to the preparation for the first. I can't even remember the way, it's been so long since we were asked together."

"It isn't hard to find," she told him. "It's at the end of the left-hand path. At the top."

"Where else," Lionel said and went out into the darkness.

She watched him not out for the perfect taste of his betraying him was, still seem on her lips. As he strode out of sight she smiled and turned to talk, an determined smile and resignation.

She had done her best—she felt sure she had. Lionel had done his, a tough, resolute, truly loving man. She thought she heard little Charles crying: she raised a hand to her mouth. The children, she thought. Mother of Jesus. Mother of Mary. Saint St. Anne. Everyone had done their best.

She must not hate him, it was wrong and so good would come of it.

"For men have said I am sure to love," she said slowly. "And women have said them. But not for love." The Long Friends were gathering in the dark, the left beyond her as anger.

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1

CLINT SLEEPS WITH DEEP SLIDING AND DEEP-VOWING in that early hour when it begins—a sex dream, his first in months, maybe years—about his on-again and how good she looked in their early days on Blakely, the good clean days before he grew his beard and she got her hair cut.

[illegible]

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po-know-who.

He might have laughed in spite of himself, if it hadn't gone all unceremonious again.

When he came over, he'd looked like the stepchild was out. The snarl-like frown the thousand-dollar sign in the little parody were dispersed, no funny money, no trick uranium, no twineded hurricane with plinking pink eyes. And the leading lady was holding his hand in her lap and cooing over him like he was the little after all.

"So then when you did turn and I did see your face—well, couldn't nobody recognize you, even in broad day, the way you're so scratched up."

It seemed she'd been apologizing a long time. She held a wet washcloth over his scratched face and a drizzle of liquid.

"—Anyway I mean first of all of all the fellows in Miami, Mr. Sikes, you're the last I would try to know."

The liquid ran over his lower lip into a scratch and seared like fire. He tried to sit up but found she held him trapped under the double burden of her breasts.

"It's only rain, one-fifteen. The oil runs and it would work to good in anything at Parnassus's refinery."

"There's everybody!"

"Gee, Edgar and Oskar took that name because of mine to see? Marshall Durbane wouldn't look him up for meeting

latterly. He supposed to look at your people for concussions."

She leaned over the edge of her breast and smiled his eyes with hers while her face had searched along the washcloth of his forehead.

"So we are alone, really...if you don't have any concussions?"

He went again at the rain squatters on his face and she giggled.

"I simply can't comprehend how a big tough highway like Carl Sikes let a skinny freak like him scratch you up so awful."

When she moved to rid her washing he was able to dodge her and sit up. He saw he was in the Loop's low-ceilinged front room with a rumpless hide-a-bed. A battered bottle stemmed on a hot plate on the bedside table. The bottle of nuts sat alongside in a pile of brand-new wrappers, it looked like it had been played to cool in a little snowfall. A bright blade of sunlight cut out the way through the blinds was down from the.

The windows showed him were beyond wet plastic and dirt and more plastic. He could tell by the sharp angle of the sunbeam that it was late. He found one twinkle and leaned to pull it on. The girl moved her hand to his back and up his spine. "I never see you doing any girls, Mr. Sikes. Don't you like girls?"

In a way he felt grateful for her simple-minded bluntness, it reminded him none. Keep eternally alert for hidden hooks.

"Like the girl just now, Miss Loop," he said, reaching and pulling his own eye of top book down. "Why was he thinking you?"

"Oh... Well of course we haven't seen each other in years."

"Yeah, but why was he thinking you?"

"The old man says he's a Jewish. A badback jinx, you know? He said from the first, that they're all pieces. Of course I never paid her much mind. I was scared and he seemed so, such a cowardly. The old man says she was born bad luck."

"Believe what you will, Lulu." He said the other shoe where she'd looked a brand bar beneath the draining board. She seemed to back his way, protest. No matter which way he started she was right in the end. She was also a Jewish.

"Personally I believe we make our own luck, good or bad." He looked right and looked left past her and leaned in. She was right there rubbing his bare back as he bent over to tie it on.

"Why, then, would we choose to make it anything but good, Mr. Sikes?"

"Human circumstances," he said, he, standing up and pulling the shirt back down. She backed up and parked herself right in the door in one last challenge offer of attendance. It was getting fancier and fancier. He would have grinned at her but his lips felt tied in place. "So anyway Lulu thanks for the—" looking down at the overflowing bra he decided against the morning angle. "—darning."

"Anytime. Thanks for the rescue." She dabbed at the sweat on her throat with the rain rag. "Don't catch a sudden cold going outside from this hothouse. I never understand why the Jews that old wine so studied up."

She stopped dabbing and started blowing, as though trying to cool two bowls of steaming chowder. "A girl could die of heat exhaustion."

He got past her with the pressure to come back and let her drive him if the Jeep refused to start. "Gee, my heart," he lied, sliding out into the merciful chill of the morning sunlight.

He would've crawled all the way to the docks first. Naked. In a freezing rain.

The Jeep was stone dead but parked pointed up the shoulder at enough slant that Sikes was able to collar it at a reverse and drive back to the trailer.

When he saw his reflection in the rearview he understood the pile of brand-new wrappers. She must have used the whole assorted box. He tried pulling one off but she'd flooded the tape swathed over the leaking cuts and scratches; the grease pads were glued into the dried blood and run. He was able to untie and untie about two yards of the brand-new tape but on the waxy Jeep side up to the trailer it dipped and fattened so much he had to wrap it back around his neck. He thought again of Claude Rains when he checked in the restroom. He race if they actually could crawl, from a sensible core and slipped around an ass.

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THERE'S NEW FIRE AT FIRESTONE.

Raven's Wing

B
by Joyce Carol Oates

IT WAS AT the Meadowlands track one Saturday when the accident happened to Raven's Wing—a three-year-old silky black colt who was the favorite in the first race, and one of the crowd favorites generally this season. Billy hadn't placed his bet on Raven's Wing. Betting on the 415 favorite held no excitement, and in any case, things were going too well for Raven's Wing. Billy left, and his owner's luck would be running out soon. But telling his wife about the accident the next morning Billy was surprised at how important a cause to worry, how anxious his race seemed, as if he was high, or on edge, which he was not, it was just the feeling that worked him up, and the way Linda looked at him.

—So there he was in the backstretch, looping around just, two, three, four horses to take the lead—his a head driver, Raven's Wing, doesn't let himself off easy—a little skittish at the starting gate, but then he got serious—in fact he was maybe muzzling a little faster than he worked to run, even he got out front—then something happened, it looked like he stumbled, his headquarters went down just a little—but he was going so fast, maybe forty miles an hour, the jockeyman kept him going—Jesus, it must have been three hun-



JOYCE CAROL OATES BEGAN WRITING STORIES IN THE EARLY 1960S AT AGE THREE OR FOUR—CRAFTING AND PUBLISHING TWO-LINE CAPTIONS IN CHILDREN'S PAPER. SHE HAS A STORY COLLECTION, *47 TWO-WORD CAPS*, AND SINCE THEN HAS PUBLISHED MORE THAN TEN THOUSAND PAGES OF POETRY AND FICTION. GAINING REPUTED AWARDS, ANOTHER NOTED WORK ADOPTED BY HBO WAS MANAGED TO WHITLED MUCH OF THE HONOR. "WELL, I DON'T GO TO AS MANY COUNTRY PARTIES AS YOU," ALTHOUGH RELATIVE PERFORMANCE OF BEAUFORT WAS REINTERPRETED HISTORICAL, DETECTIVE, GOTHIC, ANTIHISTORICAL FICTION. BUT REMAINS CLOSEST TO THE GOTHIC. SHE STATED DISPLAY OF GOTHICITY, FALSHIPITY LEADS TO MORE MYSTERY THAN IT IS. SHE ALSO CREATES, REPRESENTING THE LINE OF CHANGING TIMES AND PRESSURE OF EVENTS THAT THEY GET ONLY KNOWN THROUGH THE ONE ANOTHER. IN THIS STORY ONCE AGAIN AN OBSCURE PARALLEL BETWEEN THE PROTAGONIST'S WIFE AND THE GUTTER-LEVEL GOTHIC WITH PROBABLY DECIDES THE VALUE OF FREQUENTLY AND LARGELY IS OFFERED IN THE LONDONER'S EYES.

ILLUSTRATION BY LARRY LARSEN FOR THE PHOTOGRAPH BY THE PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY LARSEN



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Beyond the Ordinary

The Fields at Dusk

M

at and alone near the window in a tucked-in suit, almost in front of the neon sign that said in small, red letters *WELCOME AHEAD*. She seemed to be looking at others, the last one in her head. There was no one else in the store. Vera Pui sat by the cash register in her white smock, staring at the passing cars. Outside it was cloudy and the wind was blowing. Traffic

...in Chamberlain was going by in an almost continuous flow. "We have some good Belgians today," Vera remarked without comment. "Belgians, just not it is."

"Is it really good?"

Very good.

"All right, I'll take some," Mrs. Chandler was a steady customer. She didn't go to the supermarket at the edge of town. She was one of

BY JAMES SALTER

[illegible]

BLAUBERG, J. AND R. J. HARRIS. 1988. FERTILITY AND SEX RATIO OF COHESIVE-SEDIMENT-DWELLING FISHES. *Journal of Great Lakes Research* 14:1-11.

the best customers. He'd been. She didn't buy that much anymore.

On the plate glass the first drops of rain appeared. "Look at that. It's started," Vera said.

Mrs. Chandler turned her head. She watched the cars going by. It seemed as if it were years ago. For some reason she found herself thinking of the many times she had driven out herself or taken the train, coming into the country, stopping down into the long, bare plainlands in the darkness, her husband or a child there to meet her. It was weird. The trees were huge and black. Hello, darling. Hello, Mummy, was it a nice trip?

The small nose tips were very tight in the grommets, like cords of steel, very across the street and her own car, a foreign one, kept very close, parked near the door, facing in the wrong direction. She always did that. She was a woman who loved a curious life. She knew how to give dinner parties, like ones of days, and to make a woman. She had her way of answering invitations, of dressing, of being herself. Incomprehensible babies, you might call them. She was a woman who had read books, played golf, gone to weddings, whose legs were good, who had worked at a desk, a line, woman who ran one now and then.

The door opened and one of the farmers came in. He was wearing rubber boots. "Hi, Vera," he said.

She glanced at him. "Why aren't you out shooting?"

"Too wet," he said. He was old and didn't waste words. "The water's a bit high in a lot of places."

"My husband's out."

"What you'll find me sooner," the old man said. "My husband's a bit of a fool, but he's not a fool."

She looked at him. "What you'll find me sooner," the old man said. "My husband's a bit of a fool, but he's not a fool."

It was shooting weather, rainy and blizzed. The season had started. All day from had been the slowest work of rain and about a foot of rain, in diameter, poured over the house. She had been sitting in the kitchen and heard their boots, loud ones. She saw them through the window. They were very low, just above the trees.

The house was amid fields. From the upstairs, distant barn and fences could be seen. It was a beautiful house, in years she had felt it was unique. The garden was trekked, the wood stacked, the park kept up every season and window was in good repair. It was the same inside, everything well selected, the soft, white sofa, the rugs and chairs, the Swedish plates that were so pleasant to hold, the lamps. The house was very old, she used to say.

She remembered the morning the power was on in the house, a big one with long black neck and white chinstrap, standing there not fifteen feet away. She had turned on the stairs. "Brooklyn," she whispered.

"What?"

"Come down here. Be quiet."

They went to the window and then on to another, looking out breathlessly.

"What's he doing so near the house?"

"I don't know."

"He's big, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"But not as big as Dancer?"

"Dancer can't fly."

All gone now, gone, gone, boy. She remembered that night they came home from dinner at the Wickers, where there had been a young woman, very pale-faced, who had abandoned her marriage to study architecture. Bob Chandler had said nothing. He had merely listened, disinterested, as if it was a matter of course. At midnight in the kitchen, hardly having closed the door, he simply announced it. He had turned away from her and was hunching the wall.

"What?" she said.

"He started to repeat it but she interrupted."

"What are you saying?" she asked.

"He had met someone else."

"You're what?"

"She said the house. She went out one last time to the apartment on Eighth Street with its large windows from which, she'd passed to glass, you could see the entrance steps of the flat. A year later he returned. For a while she seemed of course. She sat at night in the empty living room, almost helpless, not bothering to eat, not bothering to do anything, staring at her dog's head and talking to him, curled on the couch at two in the morning all in her clothes. A tall woman as he had it, but then she pulled herself together, began going to church and passing on lipstick again."

Now as she returned to her house from the market, there were great, leaden clouds piled with light, moving above the trees. The wind was gusting. There was a car in the driveway as she turned in. For just a moment she was alarmed and then she recognized it. A figure came toward her.

"Hi, Bill," she said.

"I'll give you a hand." He took the biggest bag of groceries from the car and followed her into the kitchen.

"Just put it down on the table," she said.

"That's it. Thanks. How've you been?"

He was wearing a white shirt and a sport coat, expensive at one time. The kitchen seemed cold. Far off was the last pop of guns.

"Come in," she said. "It's chilly out here."

"I just came by to see if you had anything that could be taken care of before the cold weather set in."

"Oh, I am. Well," she said, "there's the upstairs bathroom. I'm going to be trouble again?"

"The pipes?"

"They're not going to break again this year?"

"Didn't we stuff some insulation in there?" he said. There was a slight, elegant air in his speech, back along the edge of his tongue. He had always had it.

"It's on the north side, in the trouble."

"Yes," she said. She was searching deeply for a cigarette. "Why do you suppose they put it there?"

"Well, that's where it's always been," he said.

He was busy but looked young. There was something hard and hopeful about him, something that was preserving his youth. All summer on the golf course, summer in a December. Even then he seemed indifferent, dark hair blowing even among companies, as if he were talking to one. There was a faint smile about him. He was a tall man. His father had a real estate agency in a cottage on the highway. Lots of houses, acreage. They were an old family in these parts. There was a line noted after them.

"There's a bad faucet. Do you want to take a look at that?"

"What's wrong with it?"

"It drips," she said. "It shows you."

She led the way upstairs. "There," she said, pointing toward the bathroom. "You can hear it."

He casually turned the water on and off a few times and left under the drip. He was doing it at one's length with a slight, casual movement of the wrist. She could see him from the bedroom. He seemed to be examining other things on the counter.

She turned on a light and sat down. It was nearly dark and the room immediately became cool. The walls were painted in a blue pattern and the rug was a soft white. The polished stone of the hearth gave a sense of order. Outside, the fields were disappearing. It was a sense of loss, one she always felt. Sometimes, looking toward the ocean, she thought of her son, although that had happened in the sound and long ago. She no longer found she returned to it every day. She said it got better after a time but that it never really went away. As with so many other things, they were right. He had been the youngest and very spoiled though a little first. She prayed for him every Sunday in church. She prayed just a simple thing: O Lord, don't overlook him, he's very small.

Only a little boy, she would sometimes said. The sight of anything dead, a bird scattered in the road, the stiff legs of a rabbit, even a dead snake, upset her.

"I think it's a washer," he said. "I'll try and hang one over sometime."

"Good," she said. "Will it be another month?"

"You know Marion and I are back together again. Did you know that?"

"Oh, I see." She gave a slight, invisible sigh. She felt savage. "I, uh..." What

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wondered, she thought later. "When did it happen?"

"A few weeks ago."

After a bit she stood up. "Shall we go downstairs?"

"I'd better not."

She poured some Scotch and went into the kitchen to get some ice from the refrigerator and add a little water. "I suppose I won't see you for a while."

It hadn't been so long. Some doctors at the Lanes, improbable nights. It was just the feeling of being with someone you liked, someone easy and inconspicuous.

"I..." She tried to find something to say. "You wish it hadn't happened."

"Something like that."

He nodded. He was standing there. His face had become a little pale, the pale of winter.

"And you?" she said.

"Oh, well." She had never heard him complain. Only about certain people. "I'm just a caretaker. She's my wife. What are you going to do, come out to her sometime and tell her everything?"

"I wouldn't do that."

"I hope not," he said.

When the door closed she did not turn. She heard the car start outside and saw the reflection of the headlights. She stood in front of the mirror and looked at her face calmly. Forty-six. It was in there as her neck and beneath her eyes. She would never be any younger. She should have guessed, she thought. She should have told him all she was feeling, all that suddenly choked her heart.

The summer with its hope and love days was gone. She had the urge to follow him, to drive past his house. The lights would be on. She would see someone through the windows.

That night she heard the branches tapping against the house and the window frame rattled. She sat down and thought of the grove, she could hear them out there. It had gotten cold. The wind was blowing their feathers. They lived a long time, ten or fifteen years, they said. The one they had seen on the lawn might still be alive, wedged back into the fields with the others, in lines the ocean where they went to be safe, the survivors of bloody contractions. Somewhere in the wet grass, she imagined, by one of those dark, sudden breast, graceful neck, dark, scissored, great wings, striving to beat, bloody sounds coming from the holes in its back.

She went around and turned on lights. The rain was coming down, the sea was crashing, a concrete jet dead in the whirling darkness.

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In the Works

by Tom Jenks

So much of a writer's work goes on in private that we usually think of writers only in terms of published books. Caught up in a good story, we scarcely see all the hours and days that went into it. But fiction writing proceeds by discovery, and as a rule, writers won't let on what they're up to. It tempts fate to reveal projects that might break off or change course. Generously, then, and in the spirit of storytelling, fifty-three American authors let us in on their secrets in progress.

JAMES HALL (*Go Tell It on the Mountain*) is at work on a book that will reconstruct the events surrounding the Atlanta murders. The story will be based on first-hand reports—interviews with the Atlanta mayor, police chief, and the parents of the children.

JOHN MATHIN (*The Sea Wind Factor*) tells us that this fall he will publish *The Friday Book*, "assorted nonfiction by a conceptual novelist inclined to rethink his hard-bore time to time with a different sort of sentence-making—usually on Friday, usually on the opposite side of the Chesapeake Bay from where I make up stories from Mondays through Thursdays." Also, he's about half done with *The Tidewater Tales: A Novel*, "conspired entirely, strictly of stories told and listened to by a couple both at the sea and at bay. The bay involved is the same aforementioned, where the 'sea wind factor' has been replaced by the downwind factor." Done or completed? "Two years or so down the road, if author and world permit, as we best they do."

MARK APPEL (*Five Agents*) grew up near Battle Creek, Michigan, and is writing his second novel on events he imagines in the life of C. W. Post. In Mark's unedited manuscript the character long is a man who believes in his product. Post continually emphasized that his faded copy was a moral in itself, a full support designed to spare the lives of cattle and hogs and sheep and bring

mentism back to mesdames and spend the coming of the day of redemption of all souls—human and animal alike, the day in which the lion would be down with the lamb and our would our ranch the helpless cat-chewing lizards who trailed in his mess."

W. G. SEYMOUR (*Shadows of the Past*) has just finished a story collection called *Grass Lake and Other Stories* and is beginning a novel about betrayal. "I think *World's End* and out on the Hudson River, the book is 'formerly contemporary but historical in vein.'"

HAROLD BROOKS continues work on his lengthy, long-awaited first novel, which he tells us is nearing completion. In a recently finished passage, the narrator's father mother tells about meeting her husband for the first time: "S. L. had a brother-in-law that would see, he really didn't care about a thing but me... did I say he was on vacation? A summer vacation? He was so gorgeous you wouldn't believe it, you couldn't believe it, I should have believed it and I didn't but I didn't want an ugly man, they spent all their time getting even. That first night was a night I can't forget, I still think about it, everybody was staring, we were astonished, they knew what was going to happen."

PHILIP CAPUTO (*A Room of One's Own*) recently finished work on a novel set in Michigan's upper peninsula. "I think *Indian Country* is a novel about the story of its emotionally troubled Vietnam veteran, who is struggling to return home psychologically. The novel describes how this journey is completed and is partially told through the narration of a character. Some of the characters are very close to the

stories and working on a novel due in to her publisher this fall.

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Titled *Between Friends*, it is, Robbins writes as, "an epic novel that most fervent need of the human race: the need to overcome the tyranny of aging and physical death. It is also about the evolution of flesh consciousness and the role that scent plays in the life of a woman in a Minoan civilization." Here's a whiff: "The best in the most intense of vegetables. The radish, admittedly, a mass leavish, but the fire of the radish is a cold fire, the fire of discontent not of passion. Tomatoes are lovely enough, yet there runs through them an undercurrent of frivolity. Beets are delectably tender."

"The best was Rapsara's favorite vegetable. You could see it in his eyes."

"In Europe there is grown much a thing that they call the triangle root. Perhaps it is mango! I wonder that we see in Rapsara. Certainly there is mango-worm in the music of Wagner, although it is another composer whose name begins, R, a, n, g, o."

MARLENE ROBINSON (*Thackeray*) put new lives in Canterbury, England, where she is writing her second novel, the story of a suburban American family. She starts on this passage: "Clara lived in a development called Wickenbury, where, although known from a conception of well-being which was not in itself fully formed... To speak generally, this was a community in which fathers worked steadily and were compensated for their labor sufficiently to permit their wives to devote themselves entirely to the rearing of children. These children tended to be pampered in the manner of people of whom nothing was demanded except that they be happy. Reared optimistically and in obedience to the best modern ways, many of them turned away from their mothers, deeply preoccupied about futures and emboldened, as it seemed, on a period of social not joyous isolation during which they had shed their parents with their rage and depression and their dark intentions, and during which they provided the landscape in glancing cars whose roofs had been lowered to make the windows more intimate and whose bodies had been lowered so that they were viewed no more as cars but as trucks, properly. And then, finally, if they were not killed or captured, they became parkily dangerous people, and their parents put aside their fears and their hopes together."

PHILIP ROSEN (*The Anatomy Lesson*) has recently completed a long epilogue to the Zerkowicz trilogy. Set in Prague and more about the city than about Zerkowicz himself, the epilogue will be included when the three books are strung in one volume next spring.

MARILEE SETTLE (*The Killing Ground*) in the first section of her new novel,

Crisolation, takes us back to the Middle Eastern, writing of her. "My Mother Born Award-winner, Almad. The narrative journey is accomplished through the memories of her central character, a woman who, years past, lost her husband shortly after their marriage. Then she had become an anthropologist, hitchhiked in the Tibetan province of Makulistan, and finally he had climbed down a well that turned out to be crawling with poisonous snakes. In the book's opening paragraph Settle establishes a vision of life. "There is a valley and certain knowledge of death. It is different people different ways. After that crossing to the less curve side of the river Shyn, stopped of the useless armor of blindness, nothing is taken for granted. Objects are more defined. Colors are brighter."

TERRY SOUTHERN (*Goodie*) is "just about finished" with a novel called *Youngblood*. "It's about a summer in the life of a young boy in Texas."

ELIZABETH TALLENT (*In Constant Flight*) writes at San Santa Fe. "When I began working on a novel I wasn't living in New Mexico, and I was here once. I think *My American Place*, the novel, was important to me of culture I was looking for myself because it is set in Santa Fe, the place I was missing. I wanted to understand to be a root ever my head. I wanted an imaginary garden with my Coast was running under the rabbit trails, and what I got were these men who, as it reflects of such an imperfect justice for writing a novel, kept being relapse—not in each other, but in things they had more or less made up. Yet by the end of the book they did seem to me to be doing so very badly, if they are each other only in fragments, at least they sometimes held on to a fragment and burrowed it between thumb and forefinger and tried to understand it." She concludes this short excerpt from *My American Place*: "We long after they even Cody had taken her to a cheap motel, advertised on billboards all along the highway to Albuquerque... Cody thought she should spend at least one night of her life doing something really dirty. They watched *Rocky Hunter* cartoons all afternoon and then the rangled with sheets. She had never seen a *Rocky Hunter* cartoon before. Cody was a connoisseur. The landscape in the cartoons was a great deal broken by a logging robot of history... Cody began kissing her between her legs and she pushed his head away. She wanted to watch the cartoon. He looked the hollow behind her knee and the inside of her ankle, cupping her foot in his hand like a shoe salesman, and when she arched her back, he lifted it as if it were a sign, as if she pushed his head away, and bowed upward to the back that rose, lightly turned, below the curve of her stomach, and she lifted herself so that he could slip a pillow under

neath her. "Hey," he said. "Are you just being nice to me?"

PETER TAYLOR (*On the Move*) and *Other Stories* has been working on a new, long fiction, titled *A Summer in Minnesota*. Here's an excerpt that highlights Taylor's subject: "The marriage of old widowers—or their attempts at remarriage—is always made more difficult, I suppose, when there are middle-aged children involved. But I believe this was especially true somehow in the backwoods, backwater city of Memphis, when I was growing up there some forty-odd years ago... One was always hearing of some old man or other whose middle-aged children had set out to save him from an ill-considered second marriage. These stories to my mind—the case of Judge Joe Murray Gorton. At the remarkable age of ninety-six, Judge Gorton expressed his desire to marry his Yankee Irish housekeeper, who had been imported from Boston for the very purpose of looking after him as his widowed. Judge Gorton's children all of them being well past sixty (scarcely *college* old) later to his own Mississippi cotton farm, establishing them there for a long remaining years in what they euphemistically referred to as the plantation master house, although beyond reach, of course, of any female predator in Memphis... I could give other examples, too, except that the reworking of them becomes too distracting for a morning with a family of grown children and his own years of decline not too inconceivably far away."

SORE VIDAL, about two years away from finishing a book that will take a chapter from his recent *London*—John Hay—and trace his career as Secretary of State under Teddy Roosevelt.

MARY WINGGATE JR. (*Island*) tells us she's fairly well into a second about the Galapagos Islands, called *The Goat Never Cries*.

ALICE WHALEN (*The Color Purple*) is a letter reply to all requests tells us that she's fairly well into a second about the Galapagos Islands, called *The Goat Never Cries*.

TOM WOLFE (*From Bauhaus to Our House*) has a book in progress, his first work of fiction, to be titled *City of Amherst*. **G**

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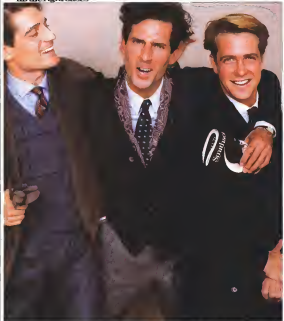
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ROBERTO AND WIGAMILLO are suited for the city weekend sport as a wool double-breasted pea jacket with switched lapels and quilted lining (1990) worn over a bright-yellow sport shirt with corded collar (1989) and a dark-colored sweater with a white collar (1989). At The Loft, New York; The Workshop, Los Angeles (New York); Runes (Tokyo); Gorman, New York.

STEVEN WIGAMILLO is suited for the city weekend sport as a wool double-breasted pea jacket with switched lapels and quilted lining (1990) worn over a bright-yellow sport shirt with corded collar (1989) and a dark-colored sweater with a white collar (1989). At The Loft, New York; The Workshop, Los Angeles (New York); Runes (Tokyo); Gorman, New York.

FRANKY COOPER is suited for the city weekend sport as a wool double-breasted pea jacket with switched lapels and quilted lining (1990) worn over a bright-yellow sport shirt with corded collar (1989) and a dark-colored sweater with a white collar (1989). At The Loft, New York; The Workshop, Los Angeles (New York); Runes (Tokyo); Gorman, New York.

Bright or subdued,
American clothes cover
all the right bases



POLO by RALPH LAUREN /All well-tailored and luxurious collection epitomizes English town dressing.

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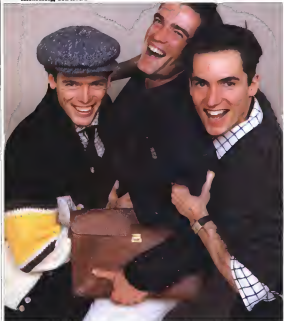
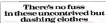
FRANKY COOPER is suited for the city weekend sport as a wool double-breasted pea jacket with switched lapels and quilted lining (1990) worn over a bright-yellow sport shirt with corded collar (1989) and a dark-colored sweater with a white collar (1989). At The Loft, New York; The Workshop, Los Angeles (New York); Runes (Tokyo); Gorman, New York.



PERRY ELLIS / *Shades of Beringer-style masculinity bring a robust flavor to full-sized children*

THE LATEST in adult fiction is an extremely well-planned, in a striking post-apocalyptic setting, written with wit and humor by a well-known author (John A. Macy). New York: J. P. Morgan. Beverly Hills: Newman-Kelley. Dallas: Bantam. Available exclusively at Macmillan. Authors with (1991) A. William (1991), New York: Pegasus (1991) by Peter E. Smith (1991).

Wine, courtesy of the winery, is the lifeblood of the season, and the staff of wholesalers present an excellent menu from the organic-braised pork knuckle and pho to the seasonal salmon. While you wait, savor the wine. The list is more eclectic, with a good deal of California and French wine, but also a few Italian. At Boulevard Goodies and Sides 5401 Ave. 26, New York, Fred Fine, SanAntonio.Boulevard.org's Newark

[illegible]

ROBERT STONE / New-found color and texture update clothing staples familiar from computer games

[illegible]

A THUNDER-RESISTANT UNARMED wood sport jacket with white studs. (LEFT) Aids feet with a super-foam orthopedic insole (Lilly); a rubber Ankle Shock Guard; and cushioned trousers (199). At Frank Stella, New York; Marshall Field's, Chicago; Marnay, Maxyca Dallas. Alpha, wool (199) on by Susan Horton. At Bonwit's, Madison, New York; Macys, Los Angeles.

[illegible]

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MODERN ROMANCE

HOW TO RUIN A GOOD THING

6 things to avoid in the beginning of a relationship

THROWING CAUTION TO THE WIND

OK, I'LL TELL YOU WHY I HAVEN'T BEEN AT WORK THIS WEEK.

BECAUSE LOVE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MONEY. THAT'S WHY.

OH, YEAH? BIG DEAL! SO FIRE ME.

LOGICAL DECISION MAKING

BUT YOU HAVE TO DO YOUR LAUNDRY ANYWAY, RIGHT? SO WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT THROWING MINE IN TOO? I MEAN, LIKE, YOU'RE THE FIRST GIRLFRIEND WHO'S HAD ANY PROBLEMS WITH THIS.

REMODELING

FRANKLY HARRY, YOUR ENTIRE WARDROBE HAS GOT TO GO AND I'D LIKE YOU TO GROW A MUSTACHE.

ALL MY BOYFRIENDS HAVE WORN THEM AND THEY'VE ALL LOOKED MARVELOUS.

LARGE FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

IT'S A ONCE IN A LIFETIME CHANCE! AND THE WAY I SEE IT, IF WE SELL YOUR CAR, WE'LL HAVE JUST ENOUGH MONEY TO PULL IT OFF.

HEY! DO YOU THINK YOUR DAD WOULD WANT TO PICK IN A FEW HOURS?

HONEST ANSWERS

WHAT FIRST ATTRACTED ME TO YOU? WELL, I GUESS IT WAS HOW MUCH YOU LOOK LIKE MY EX-WIFE. YOU MIGHT SAY IT'S SORT OF A PATTERN WITH ME.

WELL, WHAT THE HECK? YOU ONLY GO AROUND ONCE!

SUDDEN CHANGES IN PERSONAL APPEARANCE

AND IT'S SO MUCH EASIER TO TAKE CARE OF THIS WAY! I JUST SORT OF FIGURED.

WELL, WHAT THE HECK? YOU ONLY GO AROUND ONCE!

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The 60's was
the wild look.



The 70's was
the let it be look.

The 80's is
the neat look.

Introduce how you can get it. First of all, get your hair cut well and shampoo often. Then, before you comb and style, use **Vitalis Liquid** or light **Vitalis Clear Gel** to put back the manageability, shampooing and blow drying can strip away. The result will be hair that looks neat and natural, well-groomed but soft to the touch. If you have fine or thinning hair, try **Vitalis Dry Texture** for a full-bodied, natural look. And to hold today's neat look all day, use **Vitalis Super Hold** or **Regular Hold**, the pump sprays that give your hair long-lasting control that's always soft and natural, not stiff or sticky.



Vitalis
Men's Haircare.
(Don't let your hair
let the rest of you down)

SPORTS SCENES

BY PETE DEXTER

MAD DOG UNCAGED

He tries to be polite, but his public wishes have made

MAURICE "MAD DOG" VACHON is sitting in the sunroom of a peaceful-looking lake house on the south side of Ontario, Michigan, in wrestling trunks and a T-shirt. He is fifty-four years old and the top of his head, which is as shiny and hairless as your liver, is freshly scarred in a way that resembles a crayon drawing of the sun. Crooked lines lead their way out to the edges from a swirl in the middle.

Yes, the blind Maurice has been wrestling in cages again. "I don't know why," he says, "but once or twice a year—dates in Mississippi—they want me to fight in a cage. I don't know who decides these things, but sometimes you walk into the arena and there's a 'What city you in?' You didn't even know you were in the cage!"

It's a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't world, all right, but before we get into that, I probably ought to say something about the sound that comes out as Maurice speaks these words. Do you remember the lode got in *The Shogun*, how she sounded after she vomited Gerber's strained peas on the ground and began unconcerned her head?

Let me tell you about the voice that lives in Mad Dog Vachon. No protest would try it.

The voice, the head, the face—bald, the, what's wrong with that one? Surviving the damage, I feel myself scared and sorry.

"I did not always talk this way," he says. I say, "Well, English is your second language."

"That is true," he says, "but the voice you hear is from all the years of battles who have stepped on my larynx...."

It's hard to say how long that has been going on. Mad Dog has been a professional wrestler for thirty-four years, and for seven years before that he was a wrestler. He wrestled (wrestle?) for Canada, as a matter of fact, in the 1968 Olympic



one, and Paul ("the Dutchman") and my sister Diane, who wrestled too....

"Diane was a woman with a violent temper, very good for a wrestler. She quit and got married for a while to a wrestler named Buddy Wells, but it didn't last. She couldn't stand to live with somebody she could beat up."

MAURICE AND most of the brothers and sisters were born during the Depression. Ferdinand was an honest policeman, so there was never much money in the house for toys or clothes.

The children got cardboard on the bottom of goshawks for shoes, and from time to time Mrs. Vachon sent Maurice to the laundry with fifteen cents to buy his shirt to sleep in. "Every day, I would fight in school," he says. "The children called 'Kickin' it carbox' ('Kickin' the Pig') and the teachers put my hands with a ruler for writing with my left hand. There was another game. One boy would put a ring on

my shoulder, another boy would knock it off. Then we would fight."

Maurice blinks it out through his eyelids. "You do not have that game in the States."

I think back to the games I had growing up. "When I was a kid," I tell him, "there was a time when I shot anything that couldn't tell me its name. I must have killed a thousand birds, no reason except the killing. I think back on that now, and I don't know how I could have done that, or why. I just know that something was in me then that went away."

I look at him now, trying to meet him somewhere a long time ago. "Do you regret things?"

Mad Dog slings and looks across the room to the couch where his wife is sitting. Her name is Kathie. "Well," he says, "I hang my brother. Too long, because his liver turned blue. Of course, considering the way Marcel turned out, it probably wasn't long enough." He remembers that,

George in London. "The king of England was there," he says. "George the Sixth. And Queen Mary. George the Sixth saw me get the champion of India in twenty seconds. How many people can say that?"

And before the answers, there was a childhood on the outskirts of Montreal. Mad Dog was the second-oldest of thirteen children. "My father was a police detective," he says, "and of the strongest men in the world. Redmond Vachon. He lifted the great wheel at the laundry, which had not been lifted for forty years. He picked up a dozen men sitting on a platform. He kicked up cars. He lifted anything, heavy. Two years before he died, he lifted me up with one arm. I am two hundred forty pounds, he was an old man...."

"Strength like that you are born with, it was never as strong as my father, but everything I have done was to make him proud." That was why I first became a wrestler, to show him I was tough.... Yes, it made him proud. He was very proud. Of

HOW TO WEAR A SEAT BELT

YOU CAN BE BOTH SECURE AND COMFORTABLE IN YOUR CAR.

It's been proved over and over that seat belts at least double your chances of escaping death or serious injury in a severe accident.

But the freedom of movement allowed by the newer front seat belts has bothered some people. How can the seat belt hold you securely if it appears to have almost no tension?

The fact is, the shoulder belt is designed to restrict your movement only in an emergency. In normal situations, you can lean forward or to the side with little pressure from the shoulder belt.

In an emergency, the belts lock up to hold you in place. The inertial reel makes this possible. That's a mechanism as simple and reliable as gravity (as you can see in the accompanying diagram). Inertial reels have been used since the 1974 model year for the shoulder belt in many GM cars. They allow you complete freedom of movement in normal driving. You can turn easily to check traffic or reach to the glove compartment.

Adjusting your shoulder and lap belt. Even the slight tension you feel from the inertial reel is adjustable so there is almost no pressure. Pull the shoulder belt far enough away from you so that, when you let it go, it comes back flat against your chest. Then pull down slightly on the inertial reel portion, about one inch, and let it go again.

Safety experts suggest allowing no more slack on the shoulder

belt than absolutely necessary for comfort. Lap belts should be adjusted snugly as low on your hips as possible—not higher where they might damage internal organs in a crash.

How the inertial reel works. Your shoulder belt is designed to allow freedom under normal conditions, but to lock automatically and restrain you in a collision.



Under normal conditions, the pendulum and locking bar are in their rest positions. The reel which holds the seat belt is free to rotate. As you lean against it, the belt stretches.



In emergencies, such as a collision from any direction, the pendulum tilts, forcing the locking bar to engage the ratchet. The reel locks and the seat belt restrains you.

In a collision, lap/shoulder belts, worn properly, distribute the force across the large, strong bones of your hips and torso. Perhaps most important, belts help keep you from being thrown out of the vehicle in an accident.

What if you are pregnant? The American Academy of Automotive Medicine says the dangers of being unbelted in a collision during pregnancy are far greater than the slight chance of injury caused by wearing the belts.

Other advantages of belts. By holding you in a proper driving position, the lap belt provides a feeling of control, keeping you in place on rough or curved roads or in an emergency maneuver. Some people even find that the added support makes driving easier on their backs.

Next time you drive, please take a moment to buckle up. Remember, the seat belt is an effective system to help protect you, and it's already part of your car. Why not think of it as your "Life Belt" and use it.

This advertisement is part of our continuing effort to give customers useful information about their cars and trucks and the company that builds them.



Chevrolet • Pontiac
Oldsmobile • Buick
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THE ENVIRONMENT

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

FASHIONABLE KILLING

For endangered species, market-minded hunters are no longer the worst threat

IT WAS a very hot, still morning, and the cormorants clouds were just starting to flesh the way they do when they are going to be there—dense, brown by late afternoon. We were in the Everglades, and to some careless key on Loxley's River I was fishing and my guide was watching me. We'd been doing all right, but truth be told, I was more interested in my guide than in the mottled fish I was catching. My guide, you see, was known as the "legendary" alligator hunter in the history of the Everglades. He had killed thousands of alligators, deeply, and sold their hides. He was not the least bit regretful, and he had never been caught. "They never even come close," he said when I asked him.

The reason they didn't was simple enough. He knew the Everglades with an intimacy that bordered on the mystical. Know every channel and hidden hole, and marked swamps for miles and miles. As the way to Florida, perhaps.

He'd killed the gators for money, and only for money. Some people would not alligator hunt, but he'd never been tempted to try it. "I've inherited a lot of those things to think about eating one," he said.

It was done, he told me, like this: "You would stand right and then you would put a pole into the water where you knew there would be gators. Then you light the red-hot coals when you put a flashlight beam on them. You get into the light and then you wait between the eyes, usually with a high-powered 22. If there were plenty of gators in the area, you felt the current tend to a tree and kept on killing. You came back to the morning and started your butchering. Some mornings you would have a pond thick and not with blood. Anyone looking could find where you'd been nearly by following the buzzards."

What had he done last time? "When they made a deal for a dealer to buy skins. I did it as long as I could sell the



hides. When I couldn't, I quit. I started gator hunting then. A friend said I'd gone from slaying gators to slaying tourists."

THE POACHER. And others like him who were not quite as good at the trade as the Glades and the species was truly endangered. But it is hard to hold them entirely accountable. Other men brought the skins, which were then shipped to Seventh Avenue, where they were transformed into belts, shoes, and handbags that were stored in the pages of *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar*. *Pendulum* hides have been labeled the slaughter of millions and millions of animals and birds that no one would otherwise have paid any attention to. But fashion hides are more easily exterminated than people who make a living out of the Everglades. For years, no one paid alligators, but now they do. When the government made the trade in skins illegal, Seventh Avenue quit buying them and started making hand-

bags from other materials. And, supply, the alligators came back quickly. Since it has no natural predators other than man, the population has boomed, to the point where gators have become a nuisance in some parts of south Florida. Few officers who were called poachers to protect the gators are now called on, from here to there, to kill poachers that have demanded million-dollar ransoms.

We saw several gators that morning, the old poacher and I. I watched a total incantation. I didn't say a word, but I felt grateful that he'd been out of business. To my eyes, no woman could go to a gator skin as a gator skin.

Later in the morning, as we rounded a little shell bank covered with river grass, I saw a gator. I came face-to-face, for a moment, with a snaky egret. A fragile-looking bird, white as the clouds, with white head feathers that curled in the slight breeze. The bird looked

back at me, staring, and then flew away.

The poacher seemed not to notice.

"Did you ever kill birds?" I asked him.

"Birds are easy," he said.

The great bird slaughter in the Everglades took place early in this century. Plague was a \$100,000 business in 1915. Plague was easy. Birds were killed by the millions—particularly a species in order to decrease the number of birds. The birds were all of the same, and later were covered with their, sometimes with the carcasses of an entire bird. French women, especially, worshipped the look.

"When I was growing up," the poacher said, "I knew some older folks who had done that. I didn't want to do anything I'd want any part of. Good money, though."

As plague became scarce from the killings it became more valuable, and birds were willing to pay more and more for a birdskin. The area was the most heavily hunted part of the Everglades for the few birds that remained. The price of

CROCODILES WILL LIKELY BE EXTINCT BY THE END OF THE CENTURY, BUT THEY WILL ALL DIE QUIETLY, OUT OF SIGHT, THE PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE WILL SHOW NO BLOOD ON THEIR HANDS.

their fathers made the extra effort worth it. Among professional hunters, this is known as efficiency in the poacher.

The law finally stopped the killing of the birds, but not before one war—fired by the Audubon Society—was launched and the birds were on the verge of extinction. Now, of course, the birds are protected. From the market hunters and fishermen, at any rate. If the birds should disappear now, development would be the cause.

Market hunting, for the most part, is a thing of the past. Many species of wildlife are in danger of extinction, but bulldozers and draglines and chain saws are doing most of the killing, even if it is accidental.

There are still armed bands of poachers in Africa, especially in the Sudan, who are not a nearly military-style killer of animals, mainly for ivory. The Sudanese government considers this one of its most serious problems. But in general, market hunters are not thought of as an environmental problem of the first order. The species has continued beyond a mere hunting animal into something more a cooperative animal, a corporate animal geared to these smaller, more specialized tasks. More like a live of ants than a tribe of apes.

This new kind of man has brought all sorts of animals to the edge of extinction. In Africa, the great herds that have fascinated so many people (Westerners, especially) are endangered some of them past the point of much hope. And it is not only poaching that has brought this about. The animals have been farming range—habitat—to agriculture and urbanization. Some animals are killed by agricultural machinery to keep them from destroying crops. This is especially true of elephants, which appear over three hundred pounds of flesh each day in a poacher's den.

Generally bears in this country are threatened because their range has been drastically shrunk. There are plenty of bears in Alaska and in the western provinces of Canada, but in the lower forty-eight they are on the way out. Scarcely noticed in places like Yellowstone Park, it is sometimes necessary to kill them for the protection of tourists. Grizzlies that are a threat are sometimes shot by rangers. It isn't market hunting and it isn't sport hunting, but it is killing.

Not many years ago several species of birds were threatened with extinction, though none of them was being shot. They were being poisoned by farmers and various government agencies that were in the business of poisoning the farmers and businessmen were not easily persuaded to stop spraying DDT to save the birds.

The saltwater crocodile is endangered. It lives in the lower reaches of the Everglades and in the Florida Keys and has never been hunted in the slightest way. But it is on the list of endangered species, and developers are going ahead with plans, and permits have been issued to build over-seawalls adjacent to some of its nesting areas. Crocodiles will likely be extinct by the end of the century, but they will all die quietly, out of sight. The people responsible will show no blood on their hands. It is known people who have moved to the country and changed the swamp in order to build the houses of their dreams, then, once they have settled in, they get to work depleting the local man who has made for money. It would be done, but never, they and the trappers in a contest of tank killing.

The poacher, I think, understood some of this better than anyone commissioned to study the matter could have. Just before we pulled anchor for the last time and headed back to the docks, he said, "You know, getting rid of these leather leavers and the glove hunters like me doesn't mean you saved everything forever. Those engineers can think the gears and bolts—the whole thing is a lot faster than we ever could. Do it by turning a valve."

"Those engineers" are the people who control the flow of water into the Everglades, and the poacher was right about them. They had recently left the Everglades dry for a season when it should have wet, and don't had killed birds and alligators and other wildlife in numbers beyond the ability of any hunter. "It isn't humans anymore," the poacher said just before he fired the engine. "That is for damned sure. And their others will be harder to stop than the hunters ever was."

I THOUGHT about all of this last winter when some angry Canadians destroyed a helicopter that belonged to the International Fund for Animal Welfare, one of many organizations that has been working for years to stop the killing of seals. The most persistent of these organizations is Greenpeace, which has done a lot of heavy work in behalf of whales.

Many species of whale are, of course, endangered. They are killed by men who work in whaling ships that are owned primarily by Japan and Russia, two nations that have placed economic self-interest above every other consideration. Greenpeace has already been killed with whaling ships, at great risks to themselves. I cannot imagine anyone not supporting or admiring this kind of work. So,

what about the Canadians who destroyed the ship?

The people responsible, it turned out, were villagers whose livelihood had come for years from killing seals. They'd killed them for the skins, which were then sent to Europe for use by the fashion industry. During its most massive to the privilege and support of Greenpeace, a European movement to boycott Canadian products and protest the seal killings had succeeded. This year, people who have always made their living killing seals will not be hunting. Anyone who has seen the picture knows that seal killing is not pretty. Especially the clubbing of baby seals. But it is also true that nobody claims the seals are endangered. The hunt will not cease there in extinction. It is being stopped because it is opposed and it is important.

The picture in the high north is depressingly familiar. Take away their traditional means of earning a living, and people will turn to alcohol and welfare and suicide. This is especially true among the indigenous peoples of the north. They are not an urban society. Without the hunt, they are lost. The outlook for the tribes of the high north is even more gloomy than that for the glass Indians, who have suffered a calamity since the disappearance of the bison and the end of the hunt.

There are only a few hundred commercial sealers in Canada. The political momentum is enough to register their power has not been invented yet. So they are reduced to using sport helicopters. It could be that in the collection of sealions, what the sealers will now go through will be more than cancelled out by what the seals will be spared.

Women of fashion will go to less controversial furs. Ranch made is permissible too. But if you want to be pure, you can go with wool or a synthetic that wool comes from sheep, and the environmental attacks committed in the name of protecting sheep are legion. Eagles and coyotes are routinely poisoned in this country. Kangaroos are shot by the thousands in Australia. Synthetics come from the state of Delaware, where wild things roamed years ago. But nobody is going to put Du Pont out of business.

The seal hunt has been stopped, but nothing else has changed. One wonders what is next. I can't help thinking that the system made the international statement in defense of the environment when they destroyed that chopper. In the next century, we will have much more to live from helicopters than we ever did from seals.

GRASPING NATURE is a contributing editor of *Esquire* magazine.

KAHLUA Black Russian



Mmmm. Time to sit back, relax and enjoy a classic. Just an ounce of Kahlúa, two ounces of vodka on the rocks. Incompatible. Because only Kahlúa tastes like Kahlúa. For a world of delicious ideas, do send for our recipe book. On us, of course. Kahlúa, Dept. D, P.O. Box 8925, Universal City, CA 91608. Post: Kahlúa is beautiful to enjoy... beautiful to give. If you'd like extra recipe books to give with it, we'll be happy to oblige.

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